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DIALOGUES OF BEING-IN-LIVING RELATIONS RE-IMAGINING OFFICE EDUCATION

by

Frances Crocker Rhoney

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
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Dissertation Co-advisor

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From a feminist perspective this paper represents a rediscovery and reconstruction of meaning for education through a reaffirmation of our human wholeness and in celebration of our ambiguous human condition. This is a powerful and interpenetrating vagueness which leaves room for multifarious interpretations and becomes implied within the author's title. The concern reflects the rise of fundamentalism and the unwillingness to live in ambiguity, a life that requires constant learning and seeking toward authentic existence.

Exploring the historical backdrop of scientific management in relation to descriptions of a gendered hierarchy of management and the language which propelled it into existence, the author performs a thinking completion by revealing how the connecting threads of a dual structure, patriarchal social relations and political-economic forces, influenced the ambiguity of women's lives who entered the American office between 1900-1930. From this legacy, the author discusses the ethos of the modern office, rooted as it is in a hierarchy of class, gender and race distinctions, and a paradoxical mythology that says hard work and merit determines rank; conclusively pointing toward our ambiguous human condition as persons simultaneously distinct and yet intimately related to others.

The problematic lack of meaning in educational discourse becomes a living testimony through dialogue, the author's narrative along with others, reveals how women in the office science curriculum identify themselves and how within this particular historical continuum between remembrance and anticipation these stories relate to an inherent moral and social dilemma within the educational curriculum.

In celebration of our human living the author explores the magnetic tension between the social and the interhuman realm through imagination, polarity and transformation, the spiritual infusion of daily life. Dialogues with Southern women teachers from the past discloses the consequences of women's labor, the work process and action in relation to our human condition.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Co-advisor _____

Dissertation Co-advisor _____

Committee Members _____

_____

_____

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

There is something in everyone which, if acted upon, gives an entirely different quality to all they do. My dissertation represents this type of inspired action given within living time. Emancipated from past illusions of fragmented thought, my desire has been to reaffirm our human wholeness found within our daily living and to celebrate our human ambiguity embodied in our inevitable meeting. In Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations, this affirmation of faith becomes evidenced in the reality of our stories as women and directed toward a way of living and thinking which attempts to preserve the truth of our human existence in all its concrete complexities. Thus, my search reaches toward authentic existence, and, therefore, a meaning for women's education and work.

I begin, in Chapter I, LIVING BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE, by remembering the questions which surround the historical backdrop of scientific management in relation to the gendered hierarchy of management and the language responsible for bringing it into existence. From this vantage point, I perform a thinking completion by revealing how the connecting threads of a dual structure, patriarchal social relations and political-economic forces influenced the vital ambiguity of women's lives who entered American Office Work between 1900-

1930. From this legacy, I discuss the nature of the modern office, grounded in a hierarchy of class, gender, race and ethnic distinctions, and a paradoxical mythology that says hard work determines rank.

I conclude this chapter by pointing toward our ambiguous human condition as persons simultaneously distinct (our difference) and yet intimately related to others (our sameness, oneness). The significance of my quest exists between the hurtful divisiveness of false differences and the waste of possibility in the melting pot of false sameness. Herein lies the entire hope of reality, of wholeness, and of relation. Therefore, it is within Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations that I contemplate what it means to be a human being striving to be human in a world which otherwise presents itself.

In order to make this segment of history (1900-1930) more concretely present, my research took me to Harvard Business School Library. This visit enabled me "to imagine the real"--to enter into relations with people of the past through their personal handwritten letters and the influences of their lives. From this historical backdrop of living testimonies a context is provided for Chapter II, THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION, which mirrors my own narrative to that of my students.

My interest in story is as something lived in and lived through, a way in which the soul finds itself in life. Accordingly, our first task as teachers must be to re-story

the adult by restoring the imagination to a primary place in our consciousness. Deeply life-giving patterns are embodied in our own stories; these stories represent the archetypal modes of our own experiencing. This reflective/ reflexive search for being is a process which claims all of us; we work with it, or it consumes us. And perhaps, the identifying signs may be found in those more accessible to us and at the same time cause our fragmentation: caring involves both courage and sacrifice. Hence, as a former student within the community college where I now teach and serve as department chair, I speak from my own lived experience on the effects of "the cult of femininity" and the Southern learning experience.

Chapter III, IMAGINATION, POLARITY AND TRANSFORMATION, provides the philosophical foundation for this piece. It is my contention that both language and thought grow out of our memory or consciousness. The real agent of our stories, our mystery (my story) of being may be found within our own re-membering; therefore, how we come to know becomes our myth material, or the fabric of our lives. In the deepest sense, it is the grasp of significant relations wherein "we know before we know we know"--a primal awareness.(Rugg) It is the quiet mind of concentration, of attentiveness within a given situation. For perhaps, this moment could be the preliminary to relating to the ultimate principle in oneself and a glimpse of another reality which is always present, ready to step into the equation of relations.

Pragmatically speaking, this is a different sort of soul searching assessment which seeks genuine compassion and wisdom through our imagination and through a partnership of moral dialogue--Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations. This is a description of the creative process whereby persons have the power to create new patterns of thought which are embodied in the resources of the old.

Thus, Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations signifies "that all real living is in meeting" (Buber) and found between this dialogical relations a third and genuine alternative may be realized. This third alternative is not possessed by either one or the other but exists between the two. Found within this in-between space the spirit of the interhuman dwells. The significance of this position is the underlying wholeness which ties me to an ultimate wholeness (I-Thou) of divine living and that of other beings (I-It) whose reality I already have a preliminary notion.

Coleridge's theory of imagination details this world-view as a **polarity** which is understood as not one or the other but both in one. It becomes the 1 manifested in 2 (incarnate) not a composite force of 1 + 1 = 2. Polarity represents a kind of knowing that is not simply a tension between two essentially antagonistic forces but a fruitful sharing between forces of one power in the same act and instant. This is a living spiritual philosophy whereby two counter-powers share in the being of the other.

This foundation becomes particularly transformative for women in that knowledge woven through Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations is characterized by the "woman-identified" recognition of our connectedness through a common memory. (Daly) A re-membering which inspires and sustains us by creating atmospheres of something else to be in order for the relations to take place--how to be open to another thought or feeling. This transformative active force provides a context in which there can be a gradual "letting go" so that our insights may be placed into actual life. It must be incarnate; our ability to do something with our insights in this world. Thus, from here, our standpoint epistemology, a solidarity may be formed which posits "the determination of judgment by concrete, specific relation. We become concrete knowers."(Welch) Our oppressions, our deprivations become our opportunity and our vocation, our "telic-focused" outrage. For, it is only through the confirmation of our own reality in ourselves that will awaken a reality in another. "When you begin to know yourself and to glimpse the Self--the wholeness in which all relations is free and yet essential--you are no longer relating through projections."(Luke, 1985, p. 25)

In my final chapter entitled, VITA ACTIVA, A LIVING CURRICULUM, I address the question "what are we doing" by putting insights into action. It is from this position that I begin to make meaning from various dialogues with women teachers from the first half of the century. My intent is to

move back to the present moment in order to imagine new ways of thinking about our lives lived together and anticipated for the twenty-first century--a living curriculum for liberatory practice. This process becomes pivotal in that it touches upon our moral and spiritual crisis in education and therefore the world in which we live.

This dissertation represents my struggle, my lengthy journey toward wholeness. It has been written out of much anguish and therefore life, out of a prolonged grief for humanity and therefore moments of joy, out of an attempt to embrace endings so that new beginnings might occur. It is my most earnest hope that my work will be of some insight, however tiny, to women who educate other women toward their lifework.

CHAPTER I

LIVING BETWEEN PAST AND FUTURE

--A Search for Presence, An Appeal to Thought--

> . . . the rise of fundamentalism in any tradition is always a symptom of an unwillingness . . .to live in ambiguity, a life that requires constant learning.
>
> Mary Catherine Bateson, ***Peripheral Visions***

I am altogether aware of a gap, of an interval in time where I take my stand. In this small "non-time-space," found in the heart of time, the spirit dwells, the activity of thought beats and has been determined by things that are no longer and by things that are not yet. It is here between remembrance and anticipation that I become rooted in the present moment; it is here that I resist. Embodied and borne by my resistance, my intimate outburst into the stratosphere, I stand in my nakedness and become more fully aware of my concrete being in this world; my ambiguous human condition. Perhaps it is now, in the ever-renewing present, that what there is to know of truth may be revealed. Indeed, it is from this primal ground that I find my strength to live and my reason to act.(Arendt, 1968, p. 13)

I will begin by traveling metaphorically in a personal, political "thought-event" with the assumption ". . .that thought itself arises out of incidents of living experience

and must remain bound to them as the only guideposts by which to take its bearings." (Arendt, 1968, p. 14) Therefore, living and grounded in the present, I would like to move deliberately backward then forward, equidistance along Franz Kafka's intriguing diagonal line which runs rectilinear between the cyclical past and the future, "a parallelogram of forces."(p. 12) Thus, it is from this vantage point that I may see and grasp what is most clearly my own; what has come into being by my self-inserting appearance. It is my hope to expand my experience in HOW TO THINK, to keep the problem of truth in suspension: my main focus will be on how to move freeform in this gap, so that I may know, perhaps for the first time, how I should go on being.(Arendt, 1968, p. 14)

As mediator and symbol of ambiguity, neither of nature nor of culture, I stand in-between the end of the modern era and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Located in this apex, I observe a crisis. This crisis concerns a break in the tradition of rational thought where "being" as such has been named as a wholly knowable system governed by a finite number of universal laws which can be grasped and rationally directed for our benefit. Vaclav Havel witnesses this same dilemma as the end of Communism echoes a resounding message to the human race:

> We must try harder to understand than to explain. The way forward is not in the mere construction of universal systemic solutions, to be applied to reality from the outside; it is also in seeking to

> get to the heart of reality through personal experience.(Havel, 1992)

I align myself with Havel who states:

> It is my profound conviction that we have to release from the sphere of private whim such forces as a natural, unique and unrepeatable experience of the world, an elementary sense of justice, the ability to see things as others do, a sense of transcendental responsibility, archetypical wisdom, good taste, courage, compassion and faith in the importance of particular measures that do not aspire to be a universal key to salvation. Such forces must be rehabilitated.(Havel, 1992)

In remembrance of our living survivors and of those who have gone before us, these forces must be rediscovered, nourished and indicated so that significant issues might be clarified along with our ability to confront specific questions. Thus, I intend to explore and to seek understanding in the light of these pure and unmodulated spaces, of beginnings and endings, by remembering the significant questions surrounding the historical backdrop of scientific management in relation to descriptions of a gendered hierarchy of management and the language that thrust it into existence.

I will perform a "thinking completion" by revealing how the connecting threads of a dual structure, patriarchal social relations and political-economic forces, influenced the vital ambiguity of women's lives who entered the American Office between 1900-1930.

From this legacy, I will discuss the nature of the modern office, grounded as it is in a hierarchy of class, gender and race distinctions, and a paradoxical mythology that says hard work and merit determines rank; conclusively pointing toward our ambiguous human condition as persons simultaneously distinct, autonomous and yet intimately related to others.

I am searching for presence between beginnings and endings in an experiment of permanent transcendence; a limitless unfolding through Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations. A never-ending web of unfoldings that reach beyond toward what continually seems to withdraw. My desire is to become more fully awake to the reality of these moments and to achieve, a curious relatedness to things, or as Maxine Greene describes:

> . . . achieving the kind of relatedness to things the cabinetmaker achieves with respect to wood or 'the shapes slumbering within wood.' Such shapes are, as if it were, possibilities; they are always to be realized; they can never be finally encompassed or disclosed. Once provoked, the mind or the imagination keeps inclining itself, addressing itself to what is not yet.(Greene, 1984, p. 125)

This is what can happen, when a person becomes empowered to be present: a carving out from an unrepresentative life insights from one's own experience and perspective; to begin with the overly familiar and transfigure it into something different enough to make those who are awake see and hear.

> To recognize the role of perspective and vantage point, to recognize at the same time that there are always multiple perspectives and various vantage points.(Greene, 1988, p. 128)

This is to affirm that no amount of accounting or systemic set of procedures can ever be finished or complete; there is always a remainder, a gap to be identified. As exemplified, Maxine Greene brings to light the ways in which the blues have given rise to rock music and what are called "raps" testify as well to the power, not only to express the suffering of oppressed and constricted lives, but also to name them, "to identify the "gaps" between what is and what is longed for; perhaps what may some day come to be."(Greene, 1988, p. 129)

Thus, my particular writing effort is directed toward a vision of possibilities derived from a metaphor for which most of my life has evolved: "Everywoman as Secretary." It is from this situatedness that I have come to know my underlying reality of being. For it seems, embodied in connotative meanings of what it means to be a "good secretary" are qualities commonly connected to what it means to be a "good woman." Therefore, images of secretaries seem pertinent to all women. As Young-Eisendrath quotes from Harre [1984], "the legitimacy of being a person (the fundamental reality for one's existence) is limited by the 'right' to occupy a space and time in the ongoing conversations of shared reality." (Young-Eisendrath, 1988, p. 161)

> This contingent right is closely related to a consensual validation or intersubjectivity as 'truth' or worth. Women who oppose female inferiority frequently find themselves in a mediated position; what they are saying or offering is being questioned simply because they assume a posture or manner of authority or competence. (Young-Eisendrath, 1988, p. 161)

As a secretary gains authoritative status from her boss (office wife) and becomes physically present with others, she may not have the power to speak or contribute within a male board meeting. This appears to be the case even if there are female board members present who may only patronize her presence. The secretary becomes grounded in her difference and dependent childlike status "she will be seen, but she will not be heard."(Young-Eisendrath, 1988, pp. 161-162)

Kim Hirsh, a New Haven free-lance writer for Ms. Magazine, confirms this "contingent right" of the secretary as she reports: "the secretary still belongs to the boss, like a well-worn leather chair."(Hirsh, 1993, p. 93) From this I gather, "Secretary" is a gendered category and for this reason tends to take its meaning from relations to another category; namely, bosses who are frequently presumed to be men.

Thus, it is to this ambiguous position and lack that I probe. It is my desire to discern how any woman might live in a world in which such an unrepresentative life could become more visible, more universal, more symbolic and in this way make claims to our personal authority, our human worth, our truths. No one further expresses this concern more clearly than the singular voice of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, (1869-

1935) social philosopher, Industrial Revolution, Progressive Reform Era. Gilman understood that the center of inequality could be found in relation between the private and the public domain. She believed women who achieved eminence were essentially unrepresentative of their gender. This tension between the public definition of legitimate male place and the private domain assigned to women--this tension between "representative" and "exceptional" is the central issue of her work.(Gilman, 1990)

Accordingly, the center focus of this ambiguous polar tension between work, gender and "appropriate" roles is epitomized by the "permeable boundaries between the sexual objectification that women clerks resented (or desired) and the mundane (or important) work they performed every day" in the office of the early twentieth century.(Strom, 1992, p. 2) Now as then, this dichotomous cultural representation of an ordinary worker who found it difficult to find time to eat her lunch while at the other polar extreme possessing the potential of movie star, ready, " . . . in her glamorous clothing to go straight from desk to screen." (Strom, 1992, p. 2); this two-fold movement is the focus of this piece.

Sinclair Lewis (1917) epitomizes the ambiguous condition of the female office worker to be seen as woman first and as a worker second and her "complicity with oppression." Lewis consciously explores the "forced choices" and pressures that women felt personally and socially during the first third of

the twentieth century. In Sinclair's novel, Una Golden, a secretary in New York City, finds herself caught in the dilemmas of marriage or career, husband or office, birth control or motherhood:

> The office politics bred caste. Caste at Pemberton's was as clearly defined as ranks in an army.
>
> At the top were the big chiefs, the officers of the company, and the heads of the departments---Mr. Pemberton and his sons, the treasurer, the general manager, the purchasing-agent . . . .The Olympian council were they; divinities to whom the lesser clerks had never dared to speak . . . .And like envoys extraordinary were the efficiency experts whom Mr. Pemberton occasionally had in to speed up the work a bit more beyond the point of human endurance . . .
>
> Just beneath the chiefs were the caste of bright young men who would some day have the chance to be beatified into chiefs . . . They sat, in silk shirts and new ties, at shiny, flat-topped desks in rows; they answered the telephone with an air; they talked about tennis and business conditions, and were never, never bored.
>
> Intermingled with this caste were the petty chiefs, the office-managers and bookkeepers, who were velvety to those placed in power over them, but twangily nagging to the girls and young men under them. Failures themselves, they eyed sourly the stenographers who desired two dollars more a week, and assured them that while personally they would be very glad to obtain the advance for them, it would be 'unfair to the other girls.'. . .
>
> Awe-encircled as the very chiefs they appeared when they lectured stenographers, but they cowered when the chiefs spoke to them, and tremblingly fingered their frayed cuffs . . .
>
> Una's caste, made up of private secretaries to the chiefs, . . . was a staff corps, small and exclusive and out of the regular line. On the one hand she could not associate with the chiefs; on the other, it was expected of her in her capacity

> as daily confidante to one of the gods, that she should not be friendly, in coat-room or rest room or elevator, with the unrecognized horde of girls who merely copied or took the bright young men's dictation of letters to drugstores. . .
>
> There was no caste, though there was much factional rivalry, among the slaves beneath--the stenographers, copyists, clerks, waiting room attendants, office-boys, elevator-boys. . .
>
> Machines were the Pemberton force, and their greatest rivals were the machines of steel and wood, at least one of which each new efficiency expert left behind him: . . . But none of the other machines was so tyrannical as the time-clock.
>
> . . . She knew that the machines were supposed to save work. But she was aware that the girls worked just as hard and long and hopelessly after their introduction as before; . . . She could not imagine any future for these women in business except the accidents of marriage or death--or a revolution in the attitude toward them.(Lewis, 1994, pp. 230-235)

Lewis captures the mood of a gendered hierarchy within the office culture during the teens in his anecdotal description of the social relations it inspired. The workers in the lower rung, "the oppressed are metamorphosed into a blind force, a brutal fatality; . . .". Those at the top of the rung would not be so strong without "accomplices among the oppressed themselves." Thus, both the oppressor and the oppressed become reduced to things, mere objects in relation.(DeBeauvoir, 1948, pp. 97-99)

Una had to admit that woman's cruelty to woman often justified the prejudices of executives against the employment of women in business; that women were the worst foes of Woman.(Lewis, 1994, p. 223) She endeavored to picture a

future in which philoprogenitive, unambitious women, would have some way out besides being married off or killed off. She envisioned a complete change in the fundamental purpose of organized business from the increased production of soap--or books or munitions--to the increased production of happiness. How this revolution was to be accomplished she had but little more notion than the other average women in business. (Lewis, 1994, p. 235) Throughout the novel Una is representative of some millions of women in a vague but undiscouraged way; she keeps on inquiring what women in business can do to make human their existence of loveless routine.

Margery Davies speaks of competition among clerical workers, fostered by management, which retarded the development of a common class consciousness:

> The institution of bonus and premium plans, the attempts to foster a 'spirit of friendly rivalry,' and even the creation of finely delineated (and sometimes meaningless) hierarchial levels within clerical work . . . (Davies, 1982, pp. 173-174)

All of this encouraged clerical workers to compete with one another and created an effect of masking clerical workers' common class consciousness.(Davies, 1982, p. 174)

Underlying in this routine and competition were the deadening effects of a morbid system of procedures and a pervasive world view of a parts mentality of an either/or alternative being carried out in the hearts of the disempowered by predefined standards of self definition so

that most women must eventually judge their own lives a failure. Davies informs me that the assumptions laced with prejudices were:

> . . . that women were primarily concerned with being or becoming wives, mothers, and housewives . . . were meant to be subservient to men and that women . . . were believed uniquely suited to boring, menial tasks where qualities of leadership or independence were totally unnecessary. Such beliefs could become self-fulfilling prophesy. (Davies, 1982, p. 174)

On Finding A Different Voice

> The material of myth is the material of our life, the material of our body, and the material of our environment, and a living, vital mythology deals with these in terms that are appropriate to the nature of knowledge of the time.(Campbell, 1990, p. 1)

It would be difficult if not next to impossible for me to arrive at the number of years I have searched in vain for that which I have always tacitly suspected concerning a moral dilemma submerged and muted in the history of office work. Why has it been so silenced; and, who is responsible for its concealment? These questions of mystification imply a certain "opposition to others." This connection concerns those who are masters and possessors of certain kinds of knowledge and those who are not--those represented and those unrepresented.

Hidden within a dual structure of patriarchal social relations and that of a capitalistic political economy which employs techniques of use, power and control, lie hierarchial

relations governing how we think about ourselves and in turn face the world. This has to do with "the essential recursiveness of social life" which is "embodied in the very ways we all do things together--including, how we reproduce those ways in what we do."(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 70)

John Shotter and Josephine Logan comment on the common and natural order of things or those with sufficient social status who put their powers to use in a particular way which serves their own individual needs:

> As a part of 'nature,' women are also available to men of such status for mastery and possession in the same way. It is mastery and possession of what is deemed to be 'nature'--where nature is seen as whatever is an 'otherness,' as something mysterious, wild, full of unforeseen possibilities for exploitation--(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 74)

However, I agree with Shotter and Logan " . . .to attempt to understand patriarchy as a simple system of oppression that always serves the interests of men at the expense of women . . ."(Shotter and Logan, 1988, pp. 69-70) appears not only rhetorical in nature but also too shallow a view. In turn, to eliminate the inclusion of an economic system which inspires a theoretical belief that "the sky's the limit" for all those who try hard or work hard is once again misleading. These structures are enshrined in our social practices, in our ways of positioning and relating to one another, and in the resources we use in making sense of one another. While we cannot easily reject the dynamic interaction of these

practices and how women's place is determined by them, these structures must be probed; understanding the obstacles is an essential first step in bringing about change. Both Shotter and Logan hold:

> Hence, we need to understand how we can develop new practices while still making use of the resources embodied in the old. We must find a different voice, a new place currently unrecognized, from which to speak about the nature of our lives together.(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 70)

This type of thinking is in resistance to " . . .the current dominant, scientific ways of knowing and valuing: mastery and possession . . .".(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 73) Certainly there must be an alternative way of coming to know that reaches beyond power and greed. A manner of knowing that moves from the art of reason to the art of dialogue. I express this type of knowing as Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations. This is a way of knowing which comes from a given experience, "a practical kind of knowing of a contingent kind, to do with relating to and participating with others in maintaining and changing patterns of human relation."(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 75). This relations involves our daily interaction with others, how we come to know who we are in relation to our otherness and the creative process of the human spirit.(Buber, 1992, p. 8)

In sharp contrast, traditional, patriarchal patterns lead to a general, "decontexted kind of theoretical knowledge that can be possessed by individuals of their external world."

This way of coming to know embodies hierarchical structures which reproduce a "closed system of binary opposition." This structural problem continues to intoxicate our imaginations with a certain singularity of purpose and thought. Contained within its system of organization are patent answers and solutions for all.(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 75)

Conversely, I feel it is within moments of chaos that newness may be discovered and possibilities presented. The crisis that I now observe concerns a break in tradition of rational thought and manifests itself in opportunity. As Hannah Arendt clarifies:

> . . . opportunity, provided by the very fact of crisis--which tears away facades and obliterates prejudices--to explore and inquire into whatever has been laid bare of the essence of the matter . . .(Arendt, 1961, p. 174)

And for me, the essence of this force is ambiguity. Human beings come to know themselves through relations; I am what I am not. Thus, nothing exists in isolation but always in relation. Reality is a single connected whole, such that the complete description of any entity would require the comprehension of every other entity. Hence, every actual occasion or event is a particular mirroring of the whole universe. When I assume this essential ambiguity the disappearance of prejudice occurs.

Hannah Arendt holds:

> The disappearance of prejudices simply means that we have lost the answers on which we ordinarily rely without even realizing they were originally answers to questions.(Arendt, 1961, p. 174)

A crisis forces us to seek out the questions. Thus, my address brings forth questions which embrace a particular mystification concerning the most central change in American labor force during the first half of the century: How has the history of the feminization of clerical work been disguised by merely appearing to be a shift from male to female or as Richard Current (1954) suggests, simply explained and subsumed in the history of The Typewriter and The Men Who Made It?

Where have I been and why have I possessed only bits and pieces of a very large and complex puzzle so integral to my life experience? These scattered puzzle pieces have been composed of seemingly unrelated surface narratives resembling fables that not only the lighthearted or childlike could believe but also the isolated and disconnected could not fully receive. Illustratively, when I first began my search for the history of the secretary in a university which houses the oldest business education department in the nation, I found zero records. Eventually I came to locate pieces of this narrative as a by-product of technology, the typewriter.

So, how is it one might account for the factors which are influential in people's development of their sense of themselves? Are the sins of omission and commission to be found in our thoughts or in our immediate practical relations

one to another--here and now; in what voices are allowed to speak and which ones are taken seriously?

My rejoinder pertains to disempowerment found in how we think about ourselves in relation to each other. What I mean more clearly has to do with the interests of groups vested with the official production and distribution of ideas which surround the mechanisms of hegemonic constraint, the gendered hierarchy of management, of scientific management, and the language of efficiency and accountability.

Scientific Management in Relation to Disempowerment

Concerning the common knowledge and skills possessed by workers, F.W. Taylor said:

> The ingenuity and experience of each generation--of each decade, even, have without doubt handed over better methods to the next. This mass of rule-of-thumb knowledge or traditional knowledge may be said to be the principle asset or possession of every tradesman. . .which is not in the possession of the management.(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 80)

But this state of affairs can be remedied by applying "the principles of scientific management" in which, he said:

> The managers assume . . .the burden [!] of gathering all the traditional knowledge which in the past has been possessed by the workman and then by classifying, tabulating and reducing this knowledge to rules, laws and formulae. . .(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 80)

In the abstract language of cost accounting came the formulas of accountants and the efficiency of engineers.

Strom describes this as . . . "pretenses of transcending ethnic, class, sex and political divisions. Progressive policymakers thought accounting would provide fairness and 'accountability' . . ."(Strom, 1992, p. 19) Scientific management represented an effort to clean up obvious causes of oppression and offered a "paradigm of hope." This type of thinking gave justification for regulating overwhelming growth as evidenced by the rapid urbanization of cities, by immigration affecting industrialization, a more complicated work force, increasingly large business enterprise, by technology dependent upon the railroad, utilities, telephone companies whose rates lay suspect of monopoly, and a rapidly expanding hierarchy of local, state, and federal government. As both efficiency and accountability became reified, their material presence became a critical part of this quest; if something could be measured, then equity could be rationalized.(Strom, 1992, p. 19)

William Chafe suggests:

> Within such a context, the suffragists argued convincingly that extension of the franchise to females would help in the task of improving society. Both the rhetoric and substance of the suffrage movement meshed with the ethos of reform.(Chafe, 1972, p. 15)

Along with war, technology and the rise of scientific management came change in the gendered composition and size of the American Office labor force. Between 1910 and 1930 the

clerical work force in the U.S. increased overall nearly two and half times.(Chafe, 1972, p. 55)

Because of these dramatic changes and shifting of control, a variety of new occupations were being created and a need for people to fill them in order to transform office work. Some of these new occupations were ". . . business administrators, accountants, personnel managers and engineers . . ."(Strom, 1992, p. 18). Other new areas of work included department managers, private secretary, timekeeping clerk and personnel management.

All of these new areas of work were central to the revolutionary change in American office work after 1900. These contemporary middle-class experts would assume economic and social control by viewing the vast entrance of female office workers as an accessible power for gathering data and disseminating information. In turn, this knowledge would allow them to establish further authority within the socio-political milieu.(Strom, 1992, p. 18)

Consequently, scientific management facilitated the feminization of office work at the turn of the century. Two characteristics of the principles of system were directly related to this change: the work process was reorganized and classified into component steps that could be executed by using the cheapest possible labor; and secondly, most clerical workers were to be dispossessed of control over their own work. They were to be assigned tasks as opposed to the

creation or conception of their own assignments. Many of these assignments were reduced to repetitive routines such as timekeeping.(Davies, 1988, p. 165)

Since the Lowell experiment, machine technology has been associated with women and routine work. The acceleration in production of office machines and the search of a widely expanded labor force to operate them ran parallel to the cost accounting and scientific revolution. Historically, therefore, the handling of office work has emphasized the conjunction of mechanization, scientific management and the hiring of women clerical workers. As a result, the connection between women and routine work appears to be inevitable. Strom holds:

> Because both women and their employers expected women to leave the work force and eventually marry, it made no sense for their employers to train them for more responsible positions. Women were, therefore, especially suited to mechanized or rationalized jobs requiring only general level skills.(Strom, 1992 p. 173)

Hence, the nature of work itself became perverted by separating "technical means" from "value-ends," ignoring aspects of human worth and dignity found in the work performed. Work began to shape the lives of people instead of people giving shape to their own craft. Now, workers were required to perform meaningless and mechanical tasks because of the inhuman utilization of their human power.

The significance of the feminization of the clerical labor force is found in the human degradation of their work. Scientific management techniques provided the necessary strategy to control office work and workers. These techniques which focused on human activity and behavior were applied as extensively to the office as to the factory floor.

Furthermore, without the assistance of these new hordes of office workers the "machinery of scientific management" could not have been implemented. They were the salt that made the stew pot of scientific management marketable. This complicity with oppression is intricately linked to struggles which surround the meanings and symbols found within our discourse and how the female person speaks about herself in relation to her otherness.

On the Language of Scientific Management and Power Relations

Property

I know that nothing belongs to me
But the thought which unimpeded
From my soul will flow.
And every favorable moment
Which loving Fate
From the depth lets me enjoy.

Goethe

Historically, the nature of the language of scientific management was composed of ". . . balance sheets, annual reports, labor turnover sheets, and commission rate hearings--gained ascendancy over other approaches--fundamentalism, socialism or even liberalism--"(Strom, 1992, p. 20). Alas, the center focus became a particular relatedness to forms of possession, mastery and power over the material world of objects. The belief in and ultimate reliance on efficiency and accountability revealed the deep contradictions of the American social and economic system groping for new venues of interpretation. Revealed within its abstract expressions was the search of possessive individuals for ". . . a moderate response to America's problems of poverty and wealth, inequity and privilege, and the continued postponement of their solution to a later day."(Strom, 1992, p. 20)

Thus, the tendency of language holds the problematic of influence over how we think and speak about ourselves in relation to one another. Observedly, idiomatic changes can be

detected through time by our substitution of nouns in place of verbs.

Eric Fromm holds:

> A certain change in the emphasis on having and being is apparent in the growing use of nouns and the decreasing use of verbs in Western languages in the past few centuries.
>
> A noun is the proper denotation for a thing. I can say that I 'have' things: for instance that I have a table, a house, a book, a car. The proper denotation for an activity, a process, is a verb: for instance I am, I love, I desire, I hate, etc. Yet ever more frequently an 'activity' is expressed in terms of 'having'; that is, a noun is used instead of a verb. But to express an activity by 'to have' in connection with a noun is an erroneous use of language, because processes and activities cannot be possessed; they can only be experienced.(Fromm, 1976, pp. 7-8)

In our daily experience these simple expressions become apparent in the way we come to know, remember and converse. Knowing begins with the awareness of the deceptiveness of our common sense perceptions, in the sense that our picture of physical reality does not correspond to what is "really real" and mainly in the sense that most people are unaware that most of what they hold true and self-evident is an illusion produced by the social world in which they live. In the having mode it is to have more knowledge.

Remembering in the having mode is purely mechanical, yet in the being mode remembering is actively connecting. Russell Jacoby elaborates on our inability as a society to remember; our refusal to think back takes a toll in our ability to

think. Our memory has been ". . . driven out of mind by the social and economic dynamic of this society" (Jacoby, 1975, p. 4) as natural and unchangeable relations between things. Jacoby names this as our "social amnesia;" He continues by defining this situation as:

> . . . a forgetting and repression of the human and social activity that makes and can remake society. The social loss of memory is a type of reification--better: it is 'the' primal form of reification.(Jacoby, 1975, p. 4).
>
> 'All reification is a forgetting.'(Horkheimer and Adorno as quoted in Jacoby, 1975, p. 4)

Accordingly, in our discourse within the having mode each person has an opinion but is afraid of changing his own opinion because it is one of his possessions and preserves the status quo. On the other hand, in the being mode persons rely on the self-evident notion that they exist, that there is something rather than nothing. And, " . . . that something new will be born if only they have the courage to let go and to respond."(Fromm, 1976, p. 23)

The insidious consequences of possessive thought is human dismemberment and mechanization influenced by the language of systemic procedures. The more recent speech style indicates our prevailing high degree of alienation from not only ourselves but also from one another. It is here potentiality exists for a turn from compassion to passion toward contempt.

One can easily observe how popular culture transforms notions of "love" into a common vulgarity by the constant

commercial bombardment of Hallmark cards and other forms of advertisement and advice literature. It has been converted into a "goddess," and into a "cruel goddess" by altering the loving person into a person of love; an independent entity an external force. In the language of Western culture our center has been grounded on property and greed.

Barry Adams holds:

> Inferiorized people discover themselves as symbols manipulated in the transmission of the dominant culture. Their 'objective' identity lives beyond their control; the image of self, institutionalized by cultural agents, exists alien to their own experience and self-expression. The ongoing, emergent lives of a people are confronted by a 'representation' which exists only as an object for the other.(Adams, 1978, p. 31)

Gerda Lerner elucidates along with Maxine Greene the significance of this problem. Lerner states:

> Where there is no precedent, one cannot imagine alternatives to existing conditions. It is this feature of male hegemony which has been most damaging to women and has ensured their subordinate status for millennia.(Lerner, 1986, p. 223)

Greene describes the situatedness once again:

> It is difficult to posit obstacles in such an interpreted world. Ordinary life provides distractions and comforts for those who might be expected to go in search. They live among representations, images, symbolic renderings of what might seem (if it were felt and smelled) 'the gas chamber of life.'. . .The 'weight' is only dimly felt; yet, for many it is accepted as what Milan Kundera describes: It 'must' be; 'es muss sein.'(Greene, 1988, p. 15)

Hence, scientific management seemed to "bridge the gap" between relations. I am caught by this phrase. What is contained within this gap? Is this not the place where the spiritual elements of the interhuman dwell? It was by-passed, detoured once again, by thinking which follows the American venues of tradition, or the "toilet assumption." This is the belief that social unpleasantness, once flushed out of sight, ceases to exist; and this phenomenon remains central to American culture.(Slater, 1976, p. 19)

Managers rapidly drove over the top, over the surface of issues and discourses which might have led them to different areas of understanding of their position in the world and of our universal connectedness to all things. The essential problem of this action can be found in the duality of "being and seeming," two types of human existence: One of Una Golden's tasks was to take dictation from Mr. Ross . . .

> Whenever he had dictated . . . in his quiet, hypnotizing voice he would permit Una to learn what a great man he was. Hitching his chair an inch nearer to her at each sentence, looking straight into her eyes, in a manner as unboastful as though he were giving the market price of eggs, he would tell her . . . how much more he knew about electricity . . . than anybody else in the world.
>
> Not only a priest, but a virtuoso of business was he, and Una's chief task was to keep assuring him that he was a great man, a very great man--in fact, as great as she thought he was. This task was, to the uneasily sincere Una, the hardest she had ever attempted.
>
> . . .Mr. Ross in his actual work . . .For Mr. Ross actually did work now and then, though his chief duty was to make an impression on old Mr.

> Pemberton, his sons, and the other big chiefs. . . he dictated highly ethical reading matter for the house organ, . . . which spoke well of honest, feminine beauty, gardening and Pemberton's. (Lewis, 1994, pp. 226-227)

Lewis continues to elaborate on the duality of human existence, the problem between "being and seeming" found within the separation of "technical means" from "value-ends":

> All of the chiefs tried to emulate the 'moyen-age' Italians in the arts of smiling poisoning--but they did it so badly; . . . Not 'big deals" and vast grim power did they achieve, but merely a constant current of worried insecurity, and they all tended to prove . . . that the office-world is a method of giving the largest possible number of people the largest possible amount of nervous discomfort, to the end of producing the largest possible quantity of totally useless articles. . .The struggle extended from the chiefs to the clerks; they who tramped up and down a corridor, waiting till a chief was alone, glaring at others who were also manoeuvering to see him; they who studied the lightest remark of any chief and rushed to allies with the problem of, 'Now, what did he mean by that, do you think?' . . .A thousand questions of making an impression on the overlords, and of 'House Policy'--that malicious little spirit which stalks through the business house and encourages people to refuse favors.(Lewis, 1994, p. 229)

Thus, the office governed by the procedures of system, the unambiguous male predominance became the implicit and essential condition of professional identity and distinction as women assumed the ambiguous position between the private and public domain. This tension between the public definition of legitimate male place and the private domain assigned to women, this tension became the center of inequality.

Shotter and Logan describe how with the language of scientific management came ". . . the conversion of an unruly, disordered, spontaneous, contexted form of life into an ordered, self-controlled, decontexted form."(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 80). Their description continues:

> It is a process that produces not only an order but a political economy, a set of rules for behaving that, to the extent one 'mastered' them, determined one's access to the goods of life. And, of course, in mastering the rules, one learns how to subject oneself to the system: one becomes dominated by one's own techniques of domination, and, as we have said by one's technique of 'resisting' domination. No wonder that Taylor said in praise of his 'principles': 'In the past the man has been first; in the future the system will be first.'(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 81)

On the Language of Technique and Power Relations Sexuality, Office Work and The Labor Process

There exists a certain curious relatedness between our language of "having" technology, power relations and how these coincide with the feminization of office work. This relatedness is composed of a "pre-dominant" tension of those empowered over against those disempowered. Office technology, like other technologies of production, war, and leisure, constructs gender around relations of power. Rosemary Pringle, an Australian sociology teacher states:

> Class power is frequently represented as a form of masculine sexual power and prestige: 'having' a secretary both signifies power and facilitates its exercise. Far from being marginal to the labor process, sexuality is a primary organising feature.(Pringle, 1988, p. 181)

As clerical work became feminized, office relations became sexualized and relations became interlaced by work, technology and power with associated definitions of coercion and pleasure. (Pringle, 1988, p. 29)

Foucault mentions in his discussion on the point of "the drive" to classify and tabulate in the same vein:

> One had to speak of [sex] as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all [here he speaks ironically], made to function according to an optimum.(Shotter and Logan, 1988, p. 80)

The ideal was to be set, of course, by the regulators--those specific persons in power.

Pringle continues to elaborate the relations between power and office workers by describing the structural inequalities between bosses and secretaries. She mentions differences in pay, working conditions, advancement opportunities, status and authority. However, power relations cannot simply be explained by these structures or mirrored by them. Power refers to a complex strategic situation, always in flux. Pringle believes:

> Tables can be turned, roles reversed, outcomes changed. Power relations have constantly to be reproduced in order to maintained. . . Since they have to be constantly reproduced by 'specific' men or possibly women there is room for change, play and experiment. . . However solid the 'structures' might look they are not set in stone. 'Bosses' for example, rarely have the arbitrary power to hire and fire or to lay down wages and conditions. They are generally employees themselves, part of a

> management hierarchy and subject to rules and regulations. There are important differences between senior executives in career positions and those more junior in the peaking order.(Pringle, 1988, p. 28)

Foucault gives his interpretation of power in relation to language:

> . . . a multiplicity of discursive elements. . . can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden. . .with the variants and different effects--according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated. . .We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.(Pringle, 1988, p. 28)

An example of a power shift or the replacing of authority with a functional responsibility can be found with the advent of the time clock and timekeeping. Strom reports its connection to female clerical workers was more important "than it might at first appear."(1992, p. 41). In order for managers to gain control over male workers and in instituting new standards of timekeeping controlled by the front office, placing women on the floor in special office enclosures became necessary. This relinquished ties that had bound male timekeepers, many of whom were foremen, to male factory workers. These relations, as suspected by management, had

been susceptible to peer pressure to "adjust" time cards. Strom continues "with relatively little in the way of shared work culture, it would be difficult for male workers to pressure 'women from the office,' who also wore the clothes of the business class, into changing cards."(Strom, 1992, p. 41) She further suggests ". . . these developments drove wedges between male and female solidarity in plants and lowered the possibilities of men including female clerical workers in unions."(Strom, 1992, p. 58)

The time clock [i.e. timekeeping] and its connection to female clerical workers and the deskilling of foremen was not the first relation of gender to office technology. As early as 1885 no large business could be found without a "typewriter." Current posits:

> Certainly the ambitious and self-respecting girl had every reason for wanting to become a 'typewriter'--as she herself was likely to be called.(Current, 1954, p. 118)

Women had few other opportunities and in 1886 a proficient woman typist could earn $15 per week; while a saleswoman in a dry good store earned only $6 per week. However, the one undisputed advantage of the female over the male clerk was, she cost less.(Current, 1954)

Current found that businessmen had paid dearly for typewriters ($125 in 1874) and needed to compensate by cutting operating expenditures. He describes: "at first they hired untrained boys, who were cheap." The operators presumably

needed no special skill; as advertised, the machine would do the work. It did not, of course, and so employees turned increasingly to women with training and experience. They had to be paid more than boys but not so much as good men typists. "In 1886, when top pay for women was fifteen dollars a week, most men were getting twenty."(Current, 1954, p. 119)

This differential in pay cast doubt on the amount of economic emancipation through the writing machine. Actually,

> . . .the women most in need of emancipation--the sweatshop slaves, for instance--were the ones least affected by the office revolution. The business employer looked for the daughters of decent middle-class families, living at home, in preference to girls from the slums or even the farms.(Current, 1954, p. 119)

It was reported that "respectable relations cannot be manufactured to order. As a rule, the clerk's entire salary is at her disposal for personal requirements." [i.e. pin money](Current, 1954, pp. 119-120)

There are various opinions concerning the distinction between men's and women's work in the office and to what extent technology has attributed to these designations. Throughout the first part of the century women's work was concentrated around routine tasks which involved automated machinery. For this reason, Rosemary Pringle comments on these associations with the advent of the typewriter:

> Typewriters were defined as appropriate for women by being associated with feminine interests and skills: sewing, playing the piano, the nimble

> fingers that were supposed to result from these activities.(Pringle, 1988, p. 174)

Over time, women have become associated with typewriters, "women only" or gender-related machines. Thus, it has become difficult for men to envision themselves as secretaries; consequently, keyboard workers have been separated from patriarchal promotional structures commonly known as the "glass ceiling." As a result of this hierarchial structure of authority, generations of secretarial students have become indoctrinated by curriculums which promote codified and impersonal rules emphasizing grooming and poise, a constant smile, and a willingness to manage office tensions as a central part of their training. Alas, the existence of codified procedures for decision making meant that clerical workers had fewer opportunities to critically think about the job they performed and therefore decision making became limited. Control over their job was diminished.

In contrast, Margery Davies reports that technological change only facilitated the feminization of clerical work. New office machines were originally "gender neutral." She states:

> Being new, they had not been associated with the male-dominated early nineteenth century office. Consequently, women hired to operate them were not met by the argument that they were employed at 'men's' machines or encroaching on 'men's work.'(Davies, 1982, p. 170)

Thus, Davies asserts that it was not because the typewriter was more suited to female workers, but because it was gender-neutral that women's entry into the office was facilitated. Davies concludes that "the feminization office was simply the result of the exigencies of supply and demand and the availability of a literate female labor."(Davies, 1982, p. 169)

However, today, there does exist a consistent public discourse which eroticizes difference. On Friday, August 3, 1990, IBM announced intentions of selling what it referred to as the "the pots and pans division." As quoted from the Wall Street Journal: "during the 60s typewriter salesmen were known for spending too much time sweet-talking secretaries that the typewriter business became known as the "romance division." (Wall Street Journal, 1990)

Recently in a brief interview I asked a local area business manager from a large hand tool corporation if he would define "What is a secretary?" His response: "Secretaries are a vehicle which enable me to coordinate people--to deliver my message to others." He seemed to think using the term "vehicle" was crude but exact. In other words, they become objectified within their duties, their responsibilities and their association with the equipment used to perform these tasks. Regretfully, he affirmed my response as being accurate.

Strom holds:

> The sudden demand for machine operators at the turn of the century created a kind of gender vacuum that women were thus available to fill. Those emphasizing proletarianization have associated women with the de-skilling of men's work.
>
> Although all of these views all have merit, they do not get at the complexity of the process by which women entered the office to take up clerical work and what happened to them once they got there.(Strom, 1992, p. 173)

Most significantly, Strom continues: "Business machines and rationalized office work were primarily adopted because they had the 'potential' to dramatically increase office work productivity."(Strom, 1992, p. 174)

Rosemary Pringle introduces another dimension of technology in relation to power by discussing ways in which popular culture projects images of secretaries through time. These popular images convey the theme of technology as a gift that men has given to women. She comments on advertisements and advice literature:

> My boss gave me a Wordplex . . . A Little Beauty from the Big Boys. . . Both secretaries and technology appear as men's possessions, a measure of their worth, the objects as well as the basis of men's power and control. The secretaries are there to operate men's machines and to service men--in ways that are, by implication, rather intimate: (Pringle, 1988, p. 180)
>
> Secretaries are invariably represented beside a typewriter. They are rarely permitted to escape from these objects. To do so would reveal their 'lack' which is perceived to make them unfit for promotional positions. (Or perhaps, even more terrifying, it would reveal that they lack nothing.)(Pringle, 1988, p. 175)

Pringle reports that in the decades before 1970 the most widely discussed piece of technology was the dictaphone. Bosses found it difficult to accept this one as empowering when it threatened to take their secretaries away from them. However, as early as 1920, dictaphones were associated to the development of typing pools. According to Pringle:

> Even when electronic machines became available in the late 1950s their market penetration was slow (AFR 16 November 1961). Managers preferred to dictate to a stenographer/secretary or write their work out in longhand, and pools consisted of stenographers and copy typists rather than audio-typists.(Pringle, 1988, p. 181)

Her findings conclude:

> The recession of 1960-61 brought pressure to make offices more efficient. . . Dictaphones were taken more seriously in the 1960s. . . In the end it was staff shortages rather than cost savings that encouraged their adoption.(Pringle, 1988, p. 181)

Michael Apple discusses the ways in which technology has proletarianized clerical workers within the office by this same centralizing force. The proletarianization of a group of workers implies that it has lost the craft-like, artisan skills or resources that placed it outside the working class:

> . . . in offices clerical work is in the process of being radically transformed with the introduction of word-processing technologies, video display terminals, and so on. Traditional forms of control--ones usually based on the dominance of the male boss--are being altered. Technical control, where one's work is deskilled and intensified by the 'impersonal' machines in the office, has made significant inroads. While certainly not

> eliminating patriarchal domination, it has in fact provided a major shift in the terrain on which it operates. Capital has found more efficient modes of control than overt patriarchal authority. (Apple, 1993, p. 257)

There is a certain "sameness" to this type of denigration of workers whereby technical acceleration brings social strains for everyone to move faster and faster until no work is ever complete but always in progression while workers become more and more distracted from life. This is particularly real for women workers who are already faced with the double load that reinforces their "special role" as the second sex, second-class citizens and therefore accelerates gender injustice.

Specifically, notions of deskilling can readily be observed in community colleges where nontraditional students seek access to technical training in order to secure needed employment. Now, it seems, one must "have" more and more knowledge to qualify for entry-level jobs since there are any number of persons with interchangeable skills within the marketplace. Ira Shor suggests:

> The great power of dominated thought is that people deny the means of their own liberation while taking responsibility for acting in ways which reproduce their powerlessness.(Shor, 1987, p. 55)

A symptom of reification is thought which is static and contained. It is the result of the rise of commodity culture and the dramatic fragmentation of social life. Thus, in mass

corporate society, the reproduction of daily life becomes ambiguous. Significant questions become vague and hard to grasp. Thought and action lose their transcendent and political qualities. This mental narrowing originates from the isolated fragment of labor each person performs on the job. Neither objectively nor in relation to work do persons appear as the authentic master of the process; quite the contrary, only a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical system. Recently an office technology student disclosed her experience of trivialization:

> I feel like I've learned everything there is to know about my job--so there is nothing left to know. (Anonymous)

From this our common experience as women workers our ability to connect and to question the given curriculum becomes manifest. Our oppressions become points of departure and in turn our vocation and challenge.

Responsibility Supplants Personal Authority
Middle-Class Women as Ideal Mediators

No life better illustrates this contradictory split between personal authority of being-in-this world and the responsibility of doing one's duty than Mary Barnett Gilson. As the daughter of a Presbyterian newspaper editor, she claims:

> I was brought up on 'waste not, want not.'. . . 'what can't be cured must be endured.' Complaining and self-pity were ignoble. If by your own effort you could not get what you wanted you kept quiet. Whining was taboo. Never, during good or bad times did my parents abandon the idea of giving their children a college education. The Scotch tradition determined that pattern and self-sacrifice was taken for granted in implementing it. There were no boys in the family, so the submerging of me and my sisters in the interests of masculine achievement was not necessary. Somehow we got along through thick and thin. But my imagination must have been lacking, for it did not occur to me that there were people who did not have even a reduced income to tide them over hard times. They did not fall within my vision and therefore their worries did not assail me.(Gilson, 1940, pp. 1-2)

From this vantage point Mary Gilson (1877-1969) came to know herself in relation to the world. Definitions of self which preceded her were not that of her own nor that of her foremothers; it was a man's subjective vision of what he wished her to be, of what he feared her to be.

> My great uncle shook his head dubiously. 'I had hoped,' he said, 'that you would sometime be the lady principal of a Female Seminary.'. . . Friends of my parents were nonplused. Had I been sent to Wellesley to prepare for a men's clothing factory?(Gilson, 1940, p. 59)

A combination of both patriarchy and Calvinism thrust Mary Gilson into the chaos of business and industry at the turn of the century. As mediator and symbol of ambiguity between the "haves" and the "have nots," she describes her work:

> Personnel work was germane to all our jobs--I was merely the clearinghouse for it, so that we could by joint agreement evolve common laws and practices and not have workers say, 'if you work for Joe you can get off any time but if you work for Frank you have the dickens of a time to get a day off.'
>
> . . .Just as corporals and lieutenants can stir up resentment among privates, even if the majors and generals are broad-minded and lenient, so foremen can completely nullify the efforts of an intelligent manager if they cherish 'authority' as the essence of supervision. And so 'authority' was a disreputable term with us. It savored of militarism. The foremen had a dignified position, a position of responsibility for the performance of a function important in the life of the entire organism of our plant. Those pink and green and orange circulars about straw bosses fell on barren ground.(Gilson, 1940, p. 92)

In her autobiography, which is confined to recollections of her preparation for and progress through the world of industry, Gilson details the best twelve years of her worklife (circa 1913) as welfare secretary or "employment superintendent" for Mr. Richard Feiss, manager of Joseph and Feiss Clothcraft Company in Cleveland. He was her mentor, "a man of imagination and courage;"(Gilson, 1940, p. 58) who was:

> . . . exclusively preoccupied with his beloved factory and the workers that he could not understand any inclination on the part of his superintendents and foremen to be interested in

> things outside. 'How do you get time for novels? he would ask if I mentioned what he considered inconsequential books I had read.(Gilson, 1940, p. 95)
>
> In the Clothcraft Shops a friendly relationship existed between foremen and workers, and this I largely attribute to Richard Feiss's constant emphasis on responsibility in place of authority as a basis of competent supervision. The concept of functionalization precluded 'lording it over' workers, so often characteristic of a military-line setup. If a man was an instruction foreman, his duty was instruction; if he was a production foremen, his duty was production; if he was an inspection foreman, his duty was inspection. His duties and responsibilities were clearly defined by management and understood by workers.(Gilson, 1940, p. 91)

In establishments where management, in accordance with Taylor's theory, assumed responsibility for creating a functionalized organization instead of the old militaristic line setup, foremen learned to regard their functions as more important than their rights:

> Responsibility supplanted authority and in the process of adjusting themselves to this new conception they soon learned there was no diminution of their prestige in abandoning the exclusive right to hire and fire.(Gilson, 1940, p. 102)
>
> Taylor laid stress on a 'mental revolution' as the sine qua non of good management. It is surely the sine qua non of good foremanship. It involves the foreman's understanding of his place in the whole process of management. This mental revolution involves just what the final achievement of international law and order will involve--sacrifice of sovereign 'rights' in the interest of general welfare.(Gilson, 1940, p. 103)

This outlook appears contradictory to the democratic process in that foremen's work became specialized and at the same time they were to know how what they were doing related to the whole process of management. How can one be focused or specialized--broken into parts and at the same time generalized--from inferences moving toward the whole? Gilson referred to this indoctrination as "prenatal education," meaning "prior to birth." This education she believed was essential to the overall understanding and effectiveness of scientific management. From this "prenatal education" thinking was to become inductive--from parts to whole--but problematic to this situation was on what foundation would their inferences be based?

> Management's duty was to see the coordination of all these functions and to train foremen to regard their own and my personnel work as basic to scientific management.(Gilson, 1940, p. 91)

The word "coordination" catches my attention, and it is from this point the problem is revealed. This was not a joint effort as a group working together shelling peas without, in any way, being coordinated. The total amount of peas shelled would not become affected if the members of the group were isolated from each other. Such self-co-ordinated work leads to a joint result which is unpremeditated by any of those who bring it about. By contrast, these foremen were co-ordinated or guided as by 'an invisible hand' towards the joint discovery of a hidden system of things. However, progress can

only advance stepwise by the person most competent to do so; the "rule-of-thumb" was out. Thus, foremen were "co-ordered" by separation; their work isolated one from the other. They, too, had become a part of the invisible hand absent of a relations of mutuality. The system would indeed become first; adjusted to the marketplace of supply and demand.

Throughout her writing Gilson continues to rehearse this same notion of responsibility replacing authority in reference to the transformation of office work and the deskilling of foremen:

> Lifting the burden of hiring and firing from them, relieving them of the countless petty duties traditionally attached to the foreman's job by means of functionalizing their work, and constantly educating them and the workers in the general policies of the firm help to remove some of the friction. (Gilson, 1940, p. 154)

In a sense of concern and apology Gilson expresses the experience of the rank and file of workers and the bitterness and envy which was inevitable as they became "stuck" in positions that were no longer promotable.

> Probably nothing in the experience of the rank and file of workers causes more bitterness and envy than the realization which comes sooner or later to many of them that they are 'stuck' and can go no further. But it is indeed bitter aloes to swallow when an apparently inferior fellow worker gets ahead by chance, by nepotism, or by favoritism. They would agree with W.B. Yeats: 'Some think it matter of course that chance should starve good men and bad advance.' (Gilson, 1940, p. 67)

Contradictorily found within the problems Gilson faced with "promotions and headaches" was the notion of specialization which replaced the craft skill and human power by machine skill and electric power. She implies that all of this will automatically bring about a greater degree of mobility of labor--but did it?

> . . .I remember seeing some skilled men operatives in a large Chicago factory who were earning over $80 a week. Some women workers near by doing work almost as skilled and certainly as exacting of energy and concentration were earning between $12 and $15.(Gilson, 1940, p. 67)

Operating under false consciousness that "pure Taylorism could potentially ignore gender in its drive toward total efficiency," Mary Gilson assumed she was living in a culture that would soon become sexually unbiased through venues of accountability. She expresses this mystification in reference to "the company union":

> I don't know just why the Clothcraft Shops in 1917 inaugurated an employee representation plan. One thing I do know, it was the management and not the workers who started it.(Gilson, 1940, p. 104)

Although she rationalized wage rates and increased women's wages in general, women were still paid about half as much as men; union protocol guaranteed that management would never make women operative cutters.

Male managers as well as the workers sought to protect the sexual division of labor and the gendered social relations

it preserved. These educated women were real threats to the inner sanctums of male power, and for this reason most "at the turn of the century, professional groups replaced haphazard systems of education, training, and apprenticeships with more stringent and formalized requirements."(Strom, 1992, p. 67) These were designed to maintain sexual purity in the higher management level positions of business administration.

Most probably under the high spirits of the suffrage movement women like Gilson served as ideal intermediaries and purveyors of middle-class culture. Gilson's management views represented a hybrid of a dispassionate system and a liberal (feminine) feeling. In speaking of the "feel of the plant" as something real to a person accustomed to plant visiting, she elaborates notions of production and monotony:

> Present-day acceleration of mechanization and specialization direct the quest for **'joy in work'** to measures extraneous to drill presses and punch presses and ever-moving belts. But too close application, without rest periods, to a highly routinized job--too great rigidity, a tendency to 'speed up'--can nullify all the efforts to introduce any joy into the life of a human being by means of pleasant working conditions and human relations. Here, too, the long run which involves maintenance of health and mind and spirit and human capacity to enjoy life is far more important to civilization than the short-run goal of production records attained at the expense of these things.(Gilson, 1940, p. 87)

Frederick Winslow Taylor was Gilson's hero as she believed him to be the most misunderstood man of the age. Explaining the situation from firsthand experience "as those

lectures left me in the state of a person who has suddenly 'got religion,'" she concludes:

> I have always felt that Frederick Taylor was greatly misunderstood. His books, Shop Management and The Principles of Scientific Management, were written for employers. Taylor, knowing intimately the steel industry employer, was enough of a realist to avoid any sob stuff. He sounded far more hard-boiled than I later knew him to be from firsthand acquaintanceship. He appealed to employers on the basis of economy and profits. Though he realized probably better than his contemporaries that scientific management properly applied, with due attention to all and not merely a part of its program, would result in shorter hours, less fatigue, and better wages for workers, he did not use these arguments to put it across. He presented it as an advantage to employers, for he knew it was they and only they who had the power and influence to adopt it.(Gilson, 1940, p. 54)

I find "paradoxical intent" in the twofold notion that fear of radical changes to be made by employers resulted in a hyper-tension which made embracing the whole plan of scientific management impossible for them. This appears to be a contradiction in force as the plan itself is based on classifying, tabulating and breaking work down into formulae or administrative units. It appears that Taylorism ordered a "buffet-style" response by management; they "Taylor-made" plans to fit particular need/s within their companies. Taylor had sold the benefits of scientific management as advantages to employers and not to employees; nevertheless, Gilson felt their lack of commitment to the whole "well-rounded" program--their piece-meal approach caused employers to shy away from its "real" purpose:

> Yet, with the usual aversion to change which is characteristic of human beings, employers in general shied away from Taylor as from a man from Mars. Later many of them adopted truncated bits of his program or so-called 'efficiency' methods evolved by amateurs or persons who had some special hobby which was far from an integrated and well-rounded plan.(Gilson, 1940, p. 54)

Gilson stressed the responsibility of management to awaken good workmanship or quality by making workers more accountable. Even now at the turn of the twentieth century these same overtones are heard and introduced as innovative solutions to age-old problems. In-house training programs call for Team Quality Management. Is this not the same approach in maintaining the status quo? Must one attempt to remove himself from the system in order for some form of newness to take shape?

As history speaks, in order for women like Gilson to be heard by those who counted, they had to align themselves with the ideas of scientific management; the most powerful business reform ethos of the period. Consequently, these women acted as buffers in an ever-growing patchwork quilt of scientific management. As their imaginations became intoxicated by these hegemonic forces, their vision became myopic; thus, blocking the landscape of their everyday reality.

However, problematic to Gilson's faithful agenda were underlying questions of reality. Did women who looked forward to being married and having families want to assume the kind of rigorous self accountability she promoted if it meant

giving up married life? Her policies included the "marriage bar" and urging young women to postpone marriage to a later date. In this way women could begin to prove their "real worth" or market value. Apparent in her pragmatic agenda is the contradicting dyad of self-worth and achievement which only serves to reflect societal values--if only women counted. This way of thinking becomes strongly influenced by scientific management linked to welfare work through training and transferring women to the office--"an equal day's wage, for an equal day's work." Gilson commented on this slogan:

> Slogans like 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay' were meaningless. It was to a really scientific study of workers and their output that we had directed our attention in working out a fair method of rewarding effort.(Gilson, 1940, p. 78)

As Gilson's experiments demonstrated, the exclusion of women and people of color from upper-level jobs remained an irrational aspect of an increasingly rational system. Needless to say, Gilson's programs dissolved after 1920 and during the depression years. It seems as though objective qualifying exams, more specific job descriptions, classifications and internal promotion policies had an ambiguous effect on the workplace. Workers perceived them to be conditions of equitable employment when in reality it operated as a giant sieve which sifted the good from the bad, future citizens--the able from the dull, those fitted for high

positions from those unfitted--"the means justifying the ends" resulted.

Strom suggests that scientific management meant "organizing human materials in ways that would make them more efficient" focusing on ". . . personnel problems in modern industry is justified as a means of improving human relations."(p. 149) Technical specialists became involved with "scientific study of the characteristics and capacities of the human part of the machinery of production." . . . efficiency became the measure of success.(Strom, 1992, p. 150)

Elton Mayo, who represented one of these human relations specialists, emphasized the need for delving into the "cooperative attitudes and psychological desires of workers to create more smoothly working and socially responsible bureaucracies." As Strom indicates, this all seemed to be a troubling issue of "how best to motivate and mobilize the 'human factor' in industry."(Strom, 1992, p. 151)

Strom continues:

> The feminine tendencies of personnel management remained suspect. Not only were individual women considered to be polluters of masculine hegemony in the corporation, but ideas associated with women were also insidious and even life-threatening to the vitality of the organizations dominated by men.(Strom, 1992, p. 151)

> In some sense the conservatives were right about the subversiveness, in both gender and class terms, of the liberal position. In turning 'their attention to the attitudes and feelings of employees, 'Reinhardt Bendix, once observed, 'American employers and managers . . . were

> inadvertently questioning the basis of their own authority.' (Strom, 1992, p. 151)

They, in many ways like Eiechmann, were simply doing their duty. Likewise, Gilson turned her explanations toward education during the "gay nineties" for the lack of background for confronting the decisions that employers were having to make concerning the lives and labor of steel and factory workers. Their vision was narrowed:

> We were so engrossed in our own plant and our immediate scene that we did not survey the general landscape. Little if any recognition was given to the problems of the entire industry or of industry in general. (Gilson, 1940, p. 95)

In the preface of her autobiography she states:

> But I believe the foundations of democracy can be strengthened by more fundamental measures than we envisioned.
>
> I came to this conclusion through my observation of the installation of scientific management during my years in a factory and my conviction that when workers were consulted in setting standards they took their responsibilities seriously. If in the early years of our industrialization workers' responsibilities had been extended beyond the four walls of the plant in which they worked, if they had been trained to deal collectively with problems not only of their industry, but of industry in general, I believe we would have a different world today. But that course would have demanded leadership, with almost supernatural foresight of owners and managers. Instead, only too many of both groups have chosen a fighting instead of a collaborative plane. The history of organized labor plainly points to that. (Gilson, 1940, p. x)

Gilson's conclusions point to the "narrowing of vision" which disenabled persons. They could only "see" what had been outlined for them from the top down; a singular, parts approach for problem solving. As a result, a myopic vision occurred; persons literally could not see the whole of things for their focus on details. This top down strategy is, of course, just what the "opulent minority"--large business owners desired in order to keep "things" in place. And it is through this same efficient veil that educators have co-opted their own personal authority in the name of responsibility and therefore the identity of their students.

At the age of sixty-three, Gilson comments on her narrowing experience of exclusion. On stationery from the Carolina Inn dated March 8, 1940, Gilson questions Dr. Mayo concerning the possibility for women to complete graduate work in business administration at Harvard and of similar problems locating textbooks appropriate for her women students. She had heard rumors among her colleagues in Chapel Hill that a few exceptions were being made. She expressed two other interests: that women be given a chance for a "floor position" at Western Electric but inquisitively said that she had been informed that "women don't like to work for women." She believed this alibi to be "pur bunk"(sic) judging from twelve years of experience. She felt that it depended entirely upon choice of women, backing and support. Education played a large role in the "climate" of the factory. Gilson's

second concern was the naivete of those who thought women commented less about job advancement than did men.

> Knowing that women are not permitted to hold positions as forewaiver at Western Electric and knowing a few things about the attitude toward a "sky's the limit" policy for women it seemed quite natural that women would not comment on the impossible. (Gilson letter, March 8, 1940)

Mayo's response to Gilson on March 12, 1940, was emphatically direct. "Your informant in North Carolina was mistaken; women students do not attend any classes here and are not permitted to do so." He expressed his dubious sentiments on co-education . . . "My personal feeling is that education is a serious and somewhat deadly affair and that the amenities of life cannot be brought into it without damaging the education." However, he continued by stating that he was for provision of equal opportunities for women with men:

> Harvard strenuously endeavors to provide for the women at Radcliffe every advantage and is far more broadly conceived. (Mayo letter, March 12, 1940)

He concluded by saying that as far as equal opportunities are concerned . . .

> I still have remote conviction that I as a youngster would have found it exceedingly difficult to give close attention if there had been an attractive girl seated anywhere near me. I do not believe for a moment that any work at that time of my life would have been more attractive than the lady . . . this however is again a somewhat personal statement, the product perhaps of a mildly embittered view about education. (Mayo letter, March 12, 1940)

In Gilson's ever-so slightly sarcastic response to Mayo's exposition of a "separate but equal" view of women's education, she comments on Harvard's "ancient custom of expelling women from the library at 6 p.m". . ."Just why are women more dangerous after 6, I'll never fathom." She voices her belief from experience at the University of Chicago that "women are going to be discontent and frustrated as long as fences and hurdles are constantly put up in regard to graduate work." Her discussion with Mayo focuses on labor relations and how free and frank talk between workers and their supervisors is absolutely necessary . . ."the secret of good labor relations. . . creating a new atmosphere concerning 'going over heads.'"

In a postscript she clarifies the meaning of "going over heads" . . .

> That I have talked with Western Electric workers who are scared to death to go to a superintendent instead of a foreman even if they know the superintendent from living near to him. The military, line organization in plants is a bad thing if you want good morale.(Gilson letter, March 14, 1940)

Gilson closes with a cutting remark: "But you have never cared to tap my knowledge since the severance of my relations with the Rockefeller group, so why should I be boring you now?"(Gilson letter, March 14, 1940)

Since the bottom line of such groups as the Rockefellers, "the opulent minority," was profit making and because the

"inner sanctums of business" was dominated and managed by men the achievement of this goal became a reality. However, entangled and prostituted within this dilemma of exclusion were most middle-class women along with their working-class counterparts. Strom holds:

> Without a feminist movement that came from below as well as from above, women like Gilson and Pond were likely to be stranded on desert islands in a sea of male corporate culture. (Strom, 1992, p. 154)

Gilson's autobiography is an apology of conscience concerning aspects of her work; her work "being her life" in contrast to how things "seem" to appear in the reality of her everyday experience. This ambiguous human condition becomes increasingly clear around issues of foremen being stripped of their authority to hire and to fire and that of promotions; workers becoming "stuck" or frozen within the monotony of their work. The gap between Gilson's "good faith" in a system to meliorate industrial unrest and the reality of her lived life was at odds. She was physically present with others, but her "contingent place" in this span of time was that of a welfare secretary. Likewise, definitions of self were not that of her own but that of her Calvinist father, her mentor-employer, Mr. Richard Feiss and her hero and idol, F.W. Taylor. From her life I have learned that responsibility must speak out of a framework of personal authority from one's daily reality.

Looking back Gilson holds:

> Our political, economic, and social philosophies evolve from experience, but we must be true to whatever they are at any given time. And 'being true' does not mean inaction to a Scotch-Irishman. It does mean renouncing from time to time what you had formerly considered the one unquestionable right and only way, and adopting a new way.
>
> . . . It means eating your words, this thing of refusing to be a fence-sitter, but I'd rather eat my words than get calluses from sitting.
>
> . . . I read Mein Kampf in 1932 when I spent a summer in Germany. I saw Naziism spreading its dank blight over the land. I heard Hitler threaten world domination. It has been impossible for me to look into the past without an ever-present sense of apprehension about the future and a resentment against my isolationist fellow countrymen. (Gilson, 1940, p. xi)

Gilson's perception of Taylorism was centered around relations; around the intimate and the concrete. From reflections of the war years she confesses: "As I look back on that time I have a bad conscience about some of the by-products of our enthusiasm to help win the war."(p. 163) These feelings surrounded issues of pressure placed on workers to purchase liberty bonds, calling married women to work, even those with babies and "Not only the Americanization of workers but the exigencies of our work made us put more and more pressure on our workers to learn English."(p. 165) We have all become victims of the system which now precedes us.

Even the white upper middle-class women co-opted their identity in order to have any voice at all. Women are today as segmented as they were in 1930; not only from themselves

but also from one another. Gilson's problems are similar to mine as she searched for appropriate textbooks which included what has been consistently hidden from our female students. Primarily, critical issues that influence and direct how we think about our work, our self-identity and our everyday lives. It is my belief these same textbooks have educated women to their own demise, their own subordination, their own undoing. For millions of women do not know where they are going and do not even know where they want to go. It is a genuine act of violence that such a vast potential live lives of vague confusion. But, what more could be expected of a society which has not yet made up its mind that women are really people. It is this type of thinking which has stifled women's full development for millennia and has placed restrictions, hurdles and obstacles not found in the paths of men. As Gilson suggested "until the sky's the limit," as it is for men, men as well as women will suffer because all society is affected when half of it is denied equal opportunity for full development. The climate in which we live has been artificially created; but that is hopeful, for things that are artificial are subject to change.

So how did Gilson's classical education and day-to-day work experience as welfare secretary differ from the ordinary working woman who chose clerical work at the turn of the century? In the next section I will focus on the ways in

which education influenced the masses of women who chose clerical work between 1900-1930.

The Gendered Curriculum of American High Schools Class, Race and Ethnicity in Office Work

In reference to education and women's work during the early part of the century, John Rury states:

> The movement of large numbers of women into clerical work and other nonmanual occupations probably comprised the most important 'direct' effect that education had on women's work in this period. (Rury, 1991, p. 93)

Specifically, office clerical work required a relatively high level of education which was directly defined by the needs of business and industry. Women bookkeepers or stenographers had to know at least some basic arithmetic and spelling. However, it seemed questionable at times why a high school background with academic training seemed necessary for such routine job performance. (Rury, 1991, p. 107)

Rury remembers the significant questions which underscore the answers that have now become subsumed within the routine of our daily life. He continues:

> This general growth of 'nonmanual' work for women in this period, accordingly, raises the question of how education was related to major changes in female employment, and how schooling figured in the day-to-day lives of women in these positions.
> Was access to these jobs limited to certain groups of women, such as those who attended high schools?
>
> Was a relatively high level of schooling required for these jobs by employers, and if so, why?

> And how did the appearance of these new jobs for women affect the general division of labor within the female labor force?
>
> Did the rise of the white collar (or 'pink collar') work for women mean that education and other background characteristics distinguish distinct classes of women workers from one another in this period?(Rury, 1991, p. 107)

Rury uses "age structure" of various occupational categories to explore the relationship between education and women's work at the turn of the century. By using this technique he illuminates the process by which masses of women entered the labor force and the ways in which education influenced their work. He describes:

> The most striking pattern of labor force participation for women past their teens, however, was in the rapidly growing fields of white-collar employment. If manual labor drew large numbers of younger women, a rather different pattern of labor force participation appears to have existed for women working as clerical and professionals in this period.
>
> Fully one-third of all women in clerical employment, the most age specific category of women's work at the time, were in the 20-to-24 age group alone. And the percentage of all professional women in this age group was nearly as high. Significantly, the age period of most rapid entry into both these fields of work was around age 20.
>
> Over twice as many female clerical workers were in the 20-to-24 age group as were in the 15-to-19 group . . . and women in their early twenties out numbered teenagers in the professions by better than 5 to 1. In short, women entering clerical and professional jobs in this period appear to have entered the labor force at different points in their lives than women who worked in other occupational categories.(Rury, 1991, pp. 110-111)

Younger women workers, particularly those under the age of 18, were heavily concentrated in occupations calling for manual labor. The availability of paid employment for teenage women in factories tended to discourage high school attendance. This was particularly true for working-class parents whose response most probably reflected family values of forced choice. They most commonly would choose factory work over the superfluous opportunity of schooling. As Rury suggests:

> It was one thing to send one's daughter to high school when they had little else to do, but it was quite a different situation when teenage girls could get work in a factory. (Rury, 1991, p. 108)

Many of these women and their families saw high school education as irrelevant to their future roles as mothers or public workers. Schooling was considered a luxury beyond their means. This was particularly true of women who lived in industrial areas where employment was relatively easy to find.

However, along with factory work came other employment options for younger women. These work options included trade and domestic service employment which escalated in the 15-to-19 age range. But fewer women were employed in these types of work than in factory work. According to Rury, these women tended to be somewhat older than women employed in manufacturing because of their valued work experience. Rury elaborates:

> This appears to have been true especially of domestic servants in the South, where black women often worked well beyond the age at which most other women left the work force altogether.(Rury, 1991, p. 110)

The fact that so many black women were compelled to perform this sort of work for such large portions of their life is striking evidence of the impact of racism on women's work in the early twentieth century. By 1930 only 3% of African Americans were even in high school; therefore, most black women were excluded from becoming a clerical worker. (Strom, 1992, p. 297)

Employment discrimination against black Americans in offices run and staffed by whites remained systematic. As late as 1960 ". . . when two in five white wives worked in clerical or sales occupations, only one in ten black married women was in the same category."(Weiner, 1985, p. 95)

An exploration of short stories written by twentieth-century black women writers reveals discrimination in the workplace as a major theme.

> Pauline Hopkin's heroine Sappho Clark, for example, recounted a dreary tale of searching for clerical work: 'the first place that I visited was all right until the man found out I was colored. . .At the second place where I ventured to intrude the proprietor said: 'Yes: we want a stenographer, but we've no work for your kind.' A minister finally helps her to secure a job, but with the proviso that she do her work at home' so the proprietor runs no risk of being bothered with complaints' from other clerks.(Strom, 1994, p. 299)

A spokesman for one business firm tried to provide a rationalization for the exclusion of blacks at the main warehouse:

> There has never been any necessity or any reason to seriously consider bringing colored girls in with the white girls. . .Another thing to consider there would be the type of girl that we employ. They [the white girls] are all. . .mostly under twenty-five years and they don't think for themselves. . .
>
> You take one girl in an office of that size who was very anti-colored, and it wouldn't be long until her sentiment would spread. . . If a colored girl should want to obtain employment in that part of our concern where we now employ all white girls, even if she were very competent she would undoubtedly have some trouble in securing employment in that department.(Strom, 1994, p. 302)

Seemingly, it was beyond the realm of imagination for persons to explore notions of a racially integrated office in 1920. An exception to this situation was Hazel Gibson Bookman of Columbia, South Carolina, and graduate of Benedict College, who became a secretary-cashier at the National Benefits Life Insurance Company and later a bookkeeper at Waverly Hospital. Bookman was considered to be among Columbia's black middle class; she entertained the singer Marion Anderson when she visited the city in the late 1920s. Certainly Bookman was representative of the exception rather than the rule at this time.(Strom, 1992, p. 303)

John Rury indicates that "at the top of the female hierarchy in this period . . . was clerical and professional employment."(Rury, 1991, p 113) Strom indicates that these

women were generally native-born, Protestant, white middle-class women.(p. 294) Accordingly, it was these jobs that required the most female education and in turn paid the most money. Ironically, the women who most needed emancipation--the sweatshop slaves, for instance--were excluded from the office revolution. There appears to have been a universal voice by both employers and the culture at large on the need for more and better trained women for clerical work, secretaries, teachers and nurses.(Rury, 1991, p. 114)

Paradoxically as it may seem, as clerical work became more routine employers turned to the schools for suitably trained personnel. Rury reports that women generally needed between one and three years of schooling beyond grammar school level in order to compete for these jobs. Prerequisites for clerical work included a good command of the "King's English" and an elementary ability with numbers as well.

Yet problematic to this situation was the underlying question of just how much education was really necessary to perform many of the clerical jobs. Historian, Christine Anderson has suggested:

> Academic performance was less a consideration for many employers than whether a particular woman would 'fit' into a certain office culture, the latter typically defined by the men who worked there. Consequently, some employers hired only younger women, others refused to hire Jewish or Catholic women, while others merely looked for 'attractive' or 'pretty' job applicants.(Rury, 1991, p. 115)

In 1954, Bruce Bliven's book, The Wonderful Writing Machine, "The Girl in the Office," informs: "No matter what they tell their wives, businessmen and professional men like their secretaries young and they like them pretty."(Blivens, 1954, p. 11) Even now, at the close of the twentieth century, our culture continues to pretend that sexuality has nothing to do with how women office workers are chosen. All sorts of excuses are given for their selection. By nature and our common sense assumptions women are said to have "a peculiar aptitude for work requiring finger dexterity, to be more conscientious than men, and better custodians of confidential business secrets."(Blivens, 1954, p. 12)

While as early as 1904, J. Charles Groshur, who worked for a secretarial employment agency, reported to The Typewriter Trade Journal--"that nine out of ten calls asked for female secretaries, not male, and generally in most peculiar language; like, 'Have you got a pretty blonde?'" And as late as 1953, Bernice Fitz-Gibbon, an advertising woman, said "Preoccupation with pulchritude on the part of the employer may not be noble and high-minded, but it is a fact. It is sex! You can't fight it."(Bliven, 1954, pp. 13-14)

Thus, education it seems was only one of a series of personal characteristics employers considered when hiring clerical workers. Rury discovered that these characteristics may or may not have been related to job performance. But, education did remain an important consideration even if other

factors determined whether a particular woman got the job. Rury concludes:

> The manner in which these factors may have typically operated together was expressed in the words of one personnel director at the time, who confessed that his firm hired women who were 'intelligent high school graduates of a family, not Jewish.' High school attendance requirements helped employers exclude large numbers of women from work in their offices, and they developed additional criteria of exclusion to keep out still other women they judged undesirable. (Rury, 1991, p. 115)

Sharon Strom details this ethnic exclusion within the office culture:

> During World War I, Rose Chernin, a young Russian Jew, went to work in a Waterbury factory making ammunition shells. She attended special high school continuation classes for working teenagers in the mornings and then rushed to work in the afternoon. She was expected to contribute most of her paycheck to the family wage. When she related this experience many years later to her daughter, she remembered why she tenaciously held to the hope of completing high school:
>
> > Do you know what it's like, ten hours a day, looking at shells in a noisy, dirty plant? You take over a shell, this way, that way, until your mind goes blank. And always you're waiting for the break, the five-minute break to go to the toilet. This became the one meaningful thing in the ten hours of the day. You felt that there had to be another way. I thought, with the naivete of a child, that to get an education, a high-school education, would give me a job in an office. In an office! When we crossed the yard into the factory, we passed the offices. I looked at those girls, sitting there cleanly dressed at their desks. And I thought, there is another world!(Strom, 1992, p. 273)

Kate Simon stands as another example of an immigrant daughter who had come to America at the age of four. For Kate, high school meant something entirely different. She believed that graduation from elementary school "was a rite of passage" . . ."especially in the houses of immigrants, to whom eight years in . . . school meant a long and broad education."(Strom, 1992, p. 274) However, her father insisted that she enroll in a commercial high school and study secretarial skills and then find a job. Chance changed Kate's destiny:

> . . . a miracle worked by exalted personages. My father received a letter . . . It said that a girl of my interests and capabilities should be offered the broader education of a general high school which might prepare her for college. No one could deny the authority of a high school principal and my father agreed.(Strom, 1992, p. 274)

Hence, education served as a critical dividing line separating one group of women workers from another. Working in an office or a school was generally seen as preferable to working in a factory or someone else's home as a domestic. And because employers often made social and cultural background characteristics an important criteria for employment in these jobs, there was the added prestige of association with an occupation widely seen as being somewhat socially exclusive.

Thus, a sharp division of labor in women's work separated white native-born women from their black and

immigrant counterparts. As white-collar employment became more important in the twentieth century, this ethnic--and class--division of labor intensified. It is not surprising that an ethnic division of labor in this period was reflected in the ages of labor force participation for women from different ethnic backgrounds. It seems age, ethnicity, and field of employment along with education separated one group of working women from another at this time in history.

Lynn Wiener reports:

> Clerical work was the third most important job category for urban women workers in 1900, representing 9 percent of the female labor force. These women--almost entirely native-born and white--labored in city offices as bookkeepers, accountants, clerks, copyists, stenographers, and 'typewriters.' Stenographers and typists evidenced the greatest increase of all women workers between 1890 and 1900, when the numbers of women in these occupations jumped 305 percent--from 21,000 to 86,000. The feminization of office worker was unusually rapid. In 1870, 97.5 percent of the clerical labor force was male. In 1888, the New York City Young Women's Christian Association opened the first typing class for women, and female clerical education soon proliferated. By 1900, women comprised more than a third of the clerical labor force; by 1920, more than half.(Weiner, 1985, p. 29)

Rury comments:

> The existence of a large pool of relatively well-educated and culturally acceptable women could have been a key factor in the massive shift to female clerical and professional employment in this period.(Rury, 1991, p. 123)

In a recent study by Ileen DeVault examining the social origins of clerical workers, she found:

> . . .the largest group of young women planning to pursue clerical jobs were the daughters of skilled workers, from families of middling status. She has argued that these women viewed clerical work as a means of affirming or preserving their middle-class status in a period when the traditionally privileged position of skilled craftsmen was under attack in many American industries. These women did not work because of economic necessity. Rather, they took jobs as clerical workers, teachers, and telephone operators . . . in order to widen their horizons in ways that were consistent with the expectations of their parents and communities.(Rury, 1991, p. 127)

As professional and clerical employment became more important fields of women's work in the early twentieth century, a striking ethnic and class-based division of labor appeared within the female labor force. Education, it seems, served as a vehicle of opportunity for some groups of women while for others a forced choice and a mechanism of exclusion. Yet, a complex web of political, economic and social threads bound most high-school-educated women of the teens and twenties.

> . . .whether black or white, [these women] took up clerical work with enthusiasm. Parents, siblings, friends, and teachers all conveyed the idea that doing clerical work was both suitable for women and, for working-class women, a step forward in personal status.(Strom, 1992, p. 303)

Mary Gilson recalled how pervasive this ideal was among garment workers at the Clothcraft shops in Cleveland:

> The ambition of uneducated parents to give their children opportunities for an education is one of the most touching things encountered in intimate contact with workers. The faces of pressers, treading their pressing machines day in and day out, used to light up with pride as they told me of their sons and daughters in high school. They were willing to make any sacrifice for their children, hoping to ensure for them entrance into the enviable rank of the white collared.(Strom, 1992, p. 287)

Thus, women were enthusiastic about working in the public realm, supplementing their family income, and accumulating "badges of ability" which would symbolize their "self worth" in terms of "market value" in the public space. Women were eager to become educated and to use those skills that would be valued and dictated by the market. Kessler-Harris makes an astute observation when she describes office work as a segment of "an evolving labor market in which women were chosen, but in which they also chose."(Strom, 1992, p. 304)

Commercial Education

Historical literature suggests there was an immediate correlation between women's work, its rapid growth and the amount of education required for various jobs after 1900. Rury posits:

> The four decades following 1890 witnessed the emergence of a variety of new programs for women in high schools, along with important changes in the way most educators viewed women's education.(Rury, 1991, p. 131)

These changes highlight a fundamental shift from earlier educational policies which indicate almost no differentiation in subject matter for boys and girls. While the new gendered curricula of the twentieth century became more narrowly focused, it simultaneously offered young women subjects directly linked to the needs of the labor market. The emergence "of these aspects of curricular policy was an important dimension of the relationship between women's education and women's work. . .".(Rury, 1991, p. 132)

Timely as it may seem, when opportunities opened for women in the labor market the twentieth century female curriculum became more restrictive. Courses in typing and stenography were offered in order to meet the burgeoning demands for skilled women to fill positions as clerical workers while courses in home economics were introduced partly out of a fear that women were losing their domestic values. "In either case, ideas about women's education became dominated by changes in women's work, and the result was a more narrowly defined curriculum."(Rury, 1991, p. 132)

This reconstruction of the American curriculum along functional lines was one of the central motivations of educational reform. The significance of this type of curricula can best be illustrated by "efficiency experts" such as David Snedden. As its name implies, functional education was obtained scientifically through the study of human activity and manifested itself in a "social efficient"

curriculum. Later, as State Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts and a Professor of Educational Sociology at Teachers College, Columbia University, Snedden was in a position to reach a large audience and his influence with vocational education was pervasive.(Kliebard, 1992, p. 44)

Along with Taylorism, standards of efficiency were set for individual units of work in line with idealized performance levels and served as the guiding force for the foundations of commercial education. School played an important role in assuring the perpetuation of women in these ambiguous assortments of clerical occupations which would begin to serve the needs of the economy as a "cheap form of labor" and a "temporary work force" which the marriage bar would insure.

Yet, a quaint obscurity embodied in the language of educational terminology tends to mask the underlying serious implications of the bureaucratic model applied to curriculum theory. Students, and in this case women, became something to be molded and manipulated on their way to filling a predetermined social role. The vocational guidance counselor became the "efficiency expert" who would measure and research skills and interests which would provide students with marketable skills.

> One of the most successful vocational education programs has been in business and secretarial skills. These programs tend to enroll women primarily. This means that a sex-segregated curriculum contributes to the maintenance of a sex-

> segregated sector of the labor market.(Spring, 1994, p. 111)

Therefore, found within the veiled language of efficiency, evolved the ambiguous nature of commercial education which was considered neither vocational nor academic but a blurring and blending of class lines. As a socially acceptable curricula for both working class and middle-class students, office work became the least understood element of the high school curriculum. Rury reports:

> Commercial subjects generally were not included under the rubric of vocational education, perhaps because office work was such a new category of employment.(Rury, 1991, p. 147)

Rury comments on historian, Harvey Kantor's findings concerning commercial education courses. This curriculum attracted mostly middle-class students while vocational education targeted working-class youth. Thus, commercial education was frequently handled as "a separate branch of the high school curriculum rather than as part of vocational education."(Rury, 1991, pp.147-148) This blurring of class lines probably accounts for the correspondences found between commercial education and the cultural framing of women's work.

However, Strom reveals contradictory aspects of "class position" in the office environment:

> Levels of education were positively correlated with the kind of clerical job a woman had and the salary she earned. Vocational guidance experts claimed that women who left school before graduating from

> high school fared poorly in the office and that the grammar school-educated were especially likely to fail. The truth of the matter, however, was that women who left school before graduating usually improved their salaries and their positions over time, although most continued to enter clerical work as machine operators or typists instead of as stenographers or secretaries.
>
> A sample of women seeking work as typists in Cleveland showed that more than half had not graduated from high school. The less education the Cleveland typist had, the longer she was likely to remain a typist; high school and college graduates had greater mobility out of typing and into stenography or bookkeeping. However, working-class women with limited educations were able, over time, to move into better clerical positions. A woman who left high school in 1906 first worked as a saleswoman for $6 a week, moved on to stenography in department stores, and then to the stenographic department of Western Electric in 1916 at $18 a week.(Strom, 1992, p. 386)

All of this underscores contradictions found in secretarial procedure textbooks whereby "Voting with one's feet," as did Helen McGregor, uncovered a significant truth about clerical work in the twentieth century:

> . . .in a labor market characterized by widely interchangeable skills and high labor turnover, changing jobs was one way in which clerical workers could protest against the system, strike back at an individual employer and carve out a measure of self-determination and personal dignity.(Strom, 1992, p. 196)

In addition to this ideological hegemony, employers, either consciously or unconsciously, segmented workers by age, education and class which in turn drove wedges among women workers and prevented their common class consciousness. The combination of the marriage bar and notions about women's

sexuality are powerful reasons why segmentation was so effective.

Strom summarizes:

> The marriage bar was not only a rational economic device for making women clerks into 'temporarily permanent' workers; it was also a cultural symbol that heightened women's difference from men, women's differences from each other, and diverted attention from women's real position in the office work force.(Strom, 1992, p. 387)

Unfortunately, at the same time that a new openness in employment appeared for women so did new patterns of constraint. Consequently, the Progressive movement in education--along with the rapid transformation of women's work--inspired the creation of commercial education which was among the fastest growing areas of study across the country. Its development was distinctively female and represents one of the clearest examples of the manner in which women's education responded to changes in the labor market or the social efficiency of workers.

Ironic as it may seem, if business educators were aware of the large numbers of women in their classes, they rarely articulated this anomaly; a tunnel-vision of blind silence pervaded this curriculum. Although business educators did observe the dissimilar career paths men and women followed in business, they seemed unable to name their contingent place in relation to the cultural milieu. Operating under the rubric of common sense assumptions, men seemed to need a more diverse

education that would coincide responsibilities they were to assume while the technical aspects of office training were suitable for women and their generally short working careers. (Rury, 1991, p. 151)

Unfortunately, educational institutions remained central to women's struggle to gain equal access to occupations other than those designated as socially appropriate. This effort surrounded women's ambiguous position as mediator between both public and private spheres and enables us to more clearly see how culture and economy work together in the everyday lives of people in places like schools.

The Whole Situation

The purpose of this chapter has been to remember the significant questions which have formed the historical backdrop of scientific management in relation to a gendered hierarchy of management and the language which thrust it into existence. These underlying questions become revealed when surveying how the connecting threads of a dual structure, patriarchal social relations and political-economic forces, influenced the vital ambiguity of women's lives who entered the American Office between 1900-1930.

From this perspective, the focus of my search has concerned an essential ambiguity which surrounded and continues to constitute secretarial work. However, embodied in these various connotative meanings of what it means to be a secretary exist potentials for cultural redefinition while ultimately addressing unsettled questions regarding what it means to be a woman living in a patriarchal society today.

Thus, my center has become both my challenge and my cure. I have attempted to become more attentive to the moment, to penetrate the overly familiar, to break through barriers built up by the profane existence of our historical situatedness and to transcend our limited and strictly conditioned horizon toward a meaning for being-in-living relations and therefore education.

In order to perform my "thinking completion" and capture the essence of the contemporary office, grounded as it is in a hierarchy of class, status, gender, race and ethnic distinctions, I have taken a close-up view of the women who worked there. From the tradition of office hierarchy in relation to the personal experiences of these women office workers, I have elaborated the paradoxical mythology that indicates hard work and merit determine rank. My effort points toward our ambiguous human condition as persons simultaneously distinct, and yet intimately related to others. More succinctly stated, how we come to know who we are as persons from our relation to others.

This tension between the office work culture and office women's subjectivity becomes epitomized by the penetrable boundaries of ". . . the sexual objectification that women clerks resented (or desired) and the mundane (or important) work they performed everyday." (Strom, 1992, p. 2) To me, the metaphor, "Everywoman as Secretary," holds the reality of this conundrum and unpacks what I believe to be one of the most serious of our cultural conflicts. Namely, cultural assumptions on how women in the office should "seem" in contrast to how they should "be." This essential ambiguity of the secretaries double bind relates to her sexuality. What I mean more concretely are definitions and criterions which emphasize qualities of personality, glamour, middle-class manners, a certain feminine domesticity while simultaneously

combining qualities of ambition and intelligence. These secretarial qualifications, reinforced by agents of cultural transmission, require a well-honed balancing ACT between the forces of ambition and obsequiousness.

Quite obviously, these requirements are contradictory as well as self defeating. Many times, even within our personal resistance, the source of our self deprecation is our own complicity with oppression combined and fueled by cultural agents who continue to rationalize inferiorized status. One of the means by which this demoralization process appears in office science curricula is through an acculturation process which breeds contempt for working-class attributes. This is a particularly apparent process occurring among working-class women who attend community colleges and aspire to work in offices. Other agents of cultural transmission include churches, the mass media, and the publishing industry as they continue to produce the language and symbolic world in which we live. Caught within this contradiction stands the faith women possess that "symbols of success" or personal authority will be dependent upon their determination to meet these conflicting standards and a reality that men will more likely gain real power.

At a deeper level, this paradox becomes even more threatening to our self-actualizing forces or to our existence as whole persons. Women's identities become confirmed in their own objectification of self as a nonperson. Now, life's

confirmation becomes "the lie of existence." The power between the ambiguous polarity of "being and seeming," and where one or the other of these attitudes predominate, lends insight on how we speak, think and act on issues concerning work, education, self-identity and our everyday lives.

It is from this angst that I seek a different voice from which to respond and to gather common ground with the other. From relations of exclusion, of mere abstracted conversation toward relations of inclusion, Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations. What I hereby describe and seek are relations which form the contents of our living and nourish connections one to another. Herein remains the possibilities for transformation and change. Primarily, women from all walks of life must learn the significance of "sister solidarity" and the connections between women who acquire eminence in the public space, "the exceptional," to those who remain "representative" of their group. Indeed, feminist must learn to take secretaries more seriously, as secretaries must also learn how to think about feminist in relation to themselves.

Two lives that exemplified these differing perspectives and forced choices of women entering office work were Una Golden and Mary Barnett Gilson. Although a fictional character, Una's life served as a universal symbol for all women who chose office work in the teens and a reminder the double-binded intricacies of their lives. Una, a small-town farm girl who came to the city for secretarial work, found her

faith caught between a career in business and the reality of her longings to become a wife and mother. Antithetically, Mary Barnett Gilson's autobiography represented an upper middle-class perspective as a graduate of Wellesley and yet a welfare secretary (personnel manager) for Richard Feiss, Clothcraft Shops. In her ambition, Mary, too, became enmeshed in a system purporting to meliorate labor unrest only to later find herself stranded in a political wilderness. A reality which proved the voracious mouth of greed took precedent over what ultimately mattered.

From these testimonies, I now move toward my own. As a daughter of a mid-century school secretary and as a life-long teacher from within the field of office science, I speak from my own lived experience in the next chapter. My story, along with my students, mirrors the effects of "the cult of femininity" on the Southern learning experience.

CHAPTER II

THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

--Toward A Meaning for Education--

After many years of teaching and now near retirement, I have become acutely aware that my long suspected notions and innermost doubts concerning education have become a reality. More clearly, I am referring to the lack of meaning found within our educational discourse as outlined and prescribed by adopted textbooks and proposed curriculum guides. These doctrines of tradition have been selected by the invisible majority who have given us not only what seems to be the boxed essentials for all to know but also how one should think about what one should know. Most regrettably, this singular world view attempts to prove that one can understand only what one can do; substituting doing for learning.

It is my intent to explore these basic assumptions from a teacher's perspective of a gendered curriculum for many years. I will use a dialogical approach, my narrative along with others, to reveal how women in the office technology program, once known as secretarial science, identify themselves and how within this particular historical continuum between remembrance and anticipation these stories relate to an inherent moral and social dilemma within the office curriculum. At issue here will be the interest of groups

vested with the official production and distribution of ideas pointing to the question--who benefits?

As a result of this discussion, I would hope to stimulate the imagination of business educators and to mobilize them out of their numbness toward a transformation of curriculum. A curriculum characterized by a relation of mutuality, directness, presentness, intensity and wholeness. This curriculum of inclusiveness is the essence of the dialogical relation whereby the teacher sees the position of the other in concrete actuality but does not lose sight of her own. It is an awareness from the other side of the other's relation to truth. This is ". . .a living answering for one another--and mutuality, living reciprocity; . . .but communal recognition of the common reality and communal testing of the common responsibility." (Buber, 1957, p. 102)

Thus, I have named this entire piece "Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations." This title implies "that all real living is in meeting" and found between this dialogical relation a third alternative may be realized. It is the presence of intensity and wholeness which will serve as a response to our previous and current curriculum of the either/or alternative or a curriculum of exclusiveness. Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations represents the whole of reality in relation in which categories become only abstractions.

My concern is a question of the whole of reality in various relations.

> Does a world-view dwell in the head or the whole man? Does it live only in the hours of proclamation or also in the silent private periods of his life? Does he use it or does he give himself to it? (Buber, 1957, p. 104)

These are the questions addressed by Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations. Hence, I am addressing the wholeness and reaffirmation of life in this title and paper.

It is my belief that one of the greatest and most critical dangers of our time resides in curricula of exclusiveness which is characterized by either/or alternatives and lends itself to an ever increasing division of issues. These issues often become self-conflicting and irreconcilable opposites. It is here that real danger exists. Our ominous condition manifests itself in the falsification of truth, the falsification of life itself. It is here within this fixed, singular position of one side or the other that persons are forced to reduce their thought and way of life into either one or another of these hostile stations. Thus, the possibilities for newness to appear becomes obstructed. Martin Buber posits:

> In the light of this danger and its tremendous implications for our age, I should venture to say that the vital need of our age is to find a way of life and a way of thought which will preserve the truth of human existence in all its concrete complexity and which will recognize that this truth is neither 'subjective' nor 'objective'--neither

> reducible to individual temperament on the one hand, nor to any type of objective absolute or objective cultural relativism on the other.(Friedman, 1960, pp. 4-5)

So what is this way of life and thought which will preserve the truth of human existence in all its concrete complexity? From Between Man and Man, Buber calls this standpoint the narrow ridge:

> I wanted by this to express that I did not rest on the broad upland of a system that includes a series of sure statements about the absolute, but on a narrow rocky ridge between the gulfs where there is no sureness of expressible knowledge but the certainty of meeting what remains undisclosed. (Friedman, 1960, p. 3)

It is this paradoxical unity of what one generally understands as alternatives. This unity of contraries is the mystery at the innermost core of the dialogue. It is here within the tension "between man and man" that truth may eventually appear perhaps for the first time as to what one might do or be.

I find this attitude decisively significant in relation to adult education for women in the community college setting. Who limits our thinking and how is this limitation produced or reproduced? Who benefits from this essential way of coming to know? And, where has it led us? It is my belief that our current educational concepts do not suffice. Conversely, the educational concept that is true and adequate to its time must move into a third dimension and experience of what "hides

behind." Therefore, curricula must be grounded on the insight that in order to move towards something, one must also proceed from something.(Buber, 1957, p. 99)

Certainly the goal or the "towards what" may be set by us; yet, the question still remains--from what ground do we proceed. This ground where one may take one's start must be more than a standpoint or an individual station. This place must be a real and primal ground:

> . . . A primal reality that does not abandon me on the way to my goal. Although I myself have chosen it for myself, it guides me so that in proceeding I do not confound it with another and thus miss it; it stands by me. It must be one that has produced me and one that is ready, if I entrust myself to it, to bear me, to guard me, to educate me. To it, to my origin, to its educative forces, the work of education will provide the full access that has been lost or diminished, or it will give its forces access to me.(Buber, 1957, p. 99)

Thus, it is from here, the multiplicity of aspects, the participatory mystery of the in between--or the paradoxical unity of alternatives, the labyrinth of my story along with other women's stories that I shall begin.

Living on the Edge of Freedom

The poet Muriel Rukeyser once wrote:

> What would happen if one woman told the truth
> about her life?
> The world would split open.(Greene, 1988, p. 57)

I was born in 1947, an only child among many; it was the Baby Boomer era. There were tons of us with parents who

sought for a better quality of life than they had experienced before the war. Needless to say, little did they know that we would later become hippies protesting many things--the Vietnam War and other oppressions which could not be spoken. These oppressions represented a force of invisible controls, of pieties and hypocrisies that stifled freedom from us.

I was seventeen then and totally unaware of my place in the world and of the limitations it offered. In reflection, I was in a dark slumber quite like Plato's Cave. However, there was something immensely sad to me about the world, but I had no language with which to express my existential angst. I did not know that Western civilization had a huge, exclusive investment in an especially singular way of perceiving the world. The weight of this dominant world view was only dimly felt, and I accepted this massively complex experience as something that must be. Now as I read Maxine Greene, she brilliantly describes my situatedness:

> It is difficult to posit obstacles in such an interpreted world. Ordinary life provides distractions and comforts for those who might be expected to go in search. They live among representations, images, symbolic renderings of what might seem (if it were felt and smelled) 'the gas chamber of life.'(Greene, 1988, p. 15)

At times in much anger and at other times in much sadness, I realize how this dominant world view played its way out in my young life. I felt the pain of its insistent, definitive ways not only through our politics, economics and

religion but most pointedly in the everyday experiences of my school life. It was here that I came to know the school as a giant sieve which sifted the good from the bad, the future citizens--the able from the dull, those fitted for the high positions from those unfitted. And so, I fell through the cracks of bombarding competition. Timely as it may seem, the community college caught me and forever changed my destiny. I will elaborate my experience of this powerful force within the educational sorting machine by exploring class, status and gender in relation to the school and community in which I lived and grew during the fifties and sixties.

My small Southern home town contained as many people as there are feet in a mile. These 5280 residents took great pride in claiming their school separate and apart from the county school system as well as from racial integration. The main industry which kept this small place on the map was the textile mills, a cotton gin, and one large trucking company. So, as it was, my 119 graduating classmates came from working class, middle class and only a few with upper middle class backgrounds.

It was difficult then, as it is now, to locate myself socially among this group of people. However, I will try to describe the pull of my ambiguous situatedness. I attended a rather wealthy middle class Protestant church, and probably for this reason many of my friends were from this social group. Our family home was located near many of these church

people but more literally between these people and Freedom. The black community was named Freedom. Old Post Road divided us; the big houses from the small and kept the line clearly there. I lived between the rich and the poor of our town; I lived and still live in the in-between, on the edge of Freedom.

A Sacred Spot, Our Front Porch

Some of my fondest memories are of my family and summer nights on our front porch. What a great place to sit and gaze at the stars and dream of distant places and people. There was a sense of solitude, peacefulness and belonging on our front porch. On some nights neighbors and relatives would visit with us, and we would have lemonade and long discussions which involved remembering and recollecting stories and tales from the past. Other times we would laugh and listen to the varied rhymes and different rhythms of negro spirituals and the night sounds of social life in Freedom. On some rare and special occasions Daddy Grace would visit his people and the music and celebration would fill the air into early morning hours.

During the early fifties the road in front of our house was still unpaved, and across from it were the cotton fields. These fields were vast and winding as far as my childlike eyes could see. On hot summer days I would lie on the hardwood floor of our living room gazing at pictures from Anderson's Fairy Tales and letting the aroma of the pages carry me far

away. While across the road, snowy thick fields of cotton waited to be picked by the negroes from Freedom. All day long they would pick; dragging bags behind them large enough to store hundreds of pounds of cotton. I was amazed at their large strong hands, their strength and their endurance. Were these the same lighthearted folk who had sung during the night?

As I remember, many of these negro workers were women. Irene was one of these women who picked cotton, kept me and did house work for my mother. One day at my insistence she took me with her to pick; the field looked inviting and full of mystery. The difference of these people was strange to me, and I was quite naturally curious. In great contrast, my dress was quite feminine; I wore Red Riding Hood's Cape with large pockets which I filled with cotton alongside Irene's massive bag. This was the first money I ever earned, a few pennies which should have been framed. However, there was something about being in the field with these people--their talk, their song, their spirit of steadiness, of fortitude--which marks my remembrance of this event.

Then there was 'Ole Pomp River,' the black gravedigger who would lumber down the dusty road in front of our house sometimes during late evening headed toward Freedom. Later he would travel back toward his home in the woods. He lived alone and separate from his people. I assume this concerned the nature of his work and the fact that sometimes he would

carry a shovel across his shoulder or a large stick in his hand to ward off barking dogs as he traveled the road. Pomp's skin was bluish black which was generally covered by a large dark hat and clothes which were torn and tattered. Every time I would see him making his way down the road I would run for the house. This is probably why I do not remember his face.

In the late fifties the road in front of our house was paved; once streets get laid down, it is very hard to change the shape of a neighborhood. And so, like the road, my position would be determined along with the reality of my life.

Out My Back Door, Old Post Road and Beyond

Out my back door and up the street there existed a new and vastly different world. These houses had playrooms filled with discarded mink coats, fine dresses and shoes for playing dressup. I wondered why my mother did not own one of these coats; I even remember inquiring. She agreed mink coats were quite beautiful but not really important or necessary for life. At the time it seemed important enough to me and I affirmed when I grew up I would buy a coat for her. It was here that I entered a dream world all of my own. My first and only punishment as a child resulted from not returning home on time from this enchanted world. Did I hear my Dad's call? In this prominent neighborhood of large homes lived my childhood friends. These homes were only one block's distance from me

with Old Post Road as the divider. Many of the black people worked in these homes and could easily walk to their work. Alas, I find it difficult to place into words the enormous gulf between the life I saw from my front porch and the life being lived from Old Post Road and beyond.

During my adolescent years my friends (both boys and girls) visited my house frequently because of the liberty found within our home. It seemed to be a refuge for all who came. Every room was used for living and having fun. My girlfriends and I performed plays for my parents, cooked meals in the kitchen and stayed up all night if we so chose. But something happened to this closeness as I grew older, as I changed from an adolescent to a teenager. My friends, but particularly my girlfriends, became more distant. Now, as I recall, the school and the curriculum in relation to the cultural milieu had much to do with this distance.

High School, Vocational Education and Femininity: Status, Class and the Limits of Personal Choice

> **It is far more difficult to murder a phantom than a reality.**
>
> **Virginia Woolf**

While in high school, I took courses which seemed to be the logical choice. Just whose logic I am still unsure, but it appeared to be the consensus of opinion that what I needed was a blend of both vocational, commercial education along with some college preparatory courses. Contradictory as it may seem, my intent and that of my parents was for me to go to

college and become a teacher. How did I get tracked into business and home economic courses?

I was sorted not only by standardized tests but also by my social class, status and my femininity. Why should someone in my position ever need to know chemistry or advanced math? The school took one look at me and decided; I was formed by specifications much like a road laid down in asphalt. The school had served as a sorting machine within a factory model. What happened here was humanly denigrating and eventually devastating to me; to have been mechanically sorted like a raw material and fashioned into a product to meet the various demands of life.

It was here within the school's competitive sort that I became separated from my former friends. Even though I remained in contact with them at church, our relation now possessed a certain distance; a phantom-like distance which existed in the reality of the relation itself but could not be explained or determined by me. It was an invisible force that rendered a definition of self-worth. I came to know who I was in relation to that which I was not: a curriculum of exclusion. It is here within the curriculum of exclusion that David Purpel identifies the particular value dyad of worth and achievement. This dyad, he believes, represents the core of our moral crisis and anguish in that it reflects a glaring contradiction between our most deeply felt moral

conviction and our most widespread social policy. He describes:

> . . .our most widespread social policy--that which demands that each person must achieve (i.e., that each of us has to earn our dignity).(Purpel, 1989, p. 34)

However, the rhetoric of our culture announces otherwise through our homes, the media and our faith that everyone is created equal, that we should love our neighbors, that each of us have inalienable rights, that we are all God's children.(Purpel, 1989, p. 34)

So why is it that we must continue to earn our dignity by our accomplishments and our successes? Purpel holds, "the answer, I believe, lies in part in our insistence on hierarchy and privilege and the necessity for having clear criteria and justification for that hierarchy of privilege."(Purpel, 1989, p. 35) Thus, "the schools mirror the culture". . . in that "it extends the realm of areas worthy of recognition."(Purpel, 1989, p. 37)

The experience which followed the sorting process engendered notions of how my life would be recognized and given shape while simultaneously placing me in a particular category with a new and different group of people. The distinctiveness of these people could be found in their parents who were members of the working class. I fit in with these people in some ways but not just entirely. I seemed to exist somewhere else in between both groups but never

completely in one or the other. My connection to each of these groups had to do with a multiplicity of aspects. These aspects concerned not only my femininity but also my status and social class. Let me attempt to describe this dilemma of social recognition.

When I was in the ninth grade, age fifteen, the captain of the football team, a senior whom I only knew by his infamous reputation, asked me to sponsor him in the school's homecoming event. Now this young man had a long-time girlfriend, but he wanted me to represent him because he thought I was the best looking girl in the school which he attributed to my auburn hair. He said if I would represent him in this athletic ceremony and celebration he would find a convertible the same color as my hair; a suitable display case in which I could ride for this gala occasion. I was flattered to the limit yet bothered about how this decision would affect his steady girlfriend whom I knew would hate me forever. But he insisted that it was extremely important for me to comply and out of vanity, I did.

The following year the new captain of the team was my boyfriend, and quite similarly I represented him in this same event. He lived just a few blocks above me beyond Old Post Road. My parents, particularly my mother, approved of this young man and was delighted with my platonic relation. His family seemed to like me too, and everyone thought we would eventually marry; but he graduated and left for Chapel Hill.

I did see him some afterwards, but things changed between us. This change had to do with an ever re-occurring distance created by the workings of a cultural sorting machine.

During my senior year I was elected by the football team to serve on the homecoming court as maid of honor. I was not a cheerleader, so I did not qualify for homecoming queen. Cheerleading I had always felt seemed unladylike because of the short skirts and continuous jumping and yelling. There was something about all of this that struck me as pathetically ludicrous, repressive and self destructive. It dealt with only the narrow focus of energies that kept innumerable people from creating their own personhood.

This was a terribly lonesome year for me, not really fitting in with either group of friends and the departure of my long-time boyfriend. My existence became filled with silences of a disconnection; to struggle against confinement and constriction and faced with this reality of my own destiny.

> Images of woman in the beauty myth are reductive and stereotyped. At any moment there are a limited number of recognizable 'beautiful' faces. Through such limited perceptions of women, women come to see their options as limited: . . .(Wolf, 1991, p. 50)

It was this same year, 1965, that I was elected by my classmates as "the prettiest in the class." However, there was something terribly bothersome to me about these symbolic rewards which concerned my self-worth and my self-definition.

Indeed, it was elevating to have so many advocates, but there was something else, a peculiar unspokenness that made me feel unworthy. I do not mean of the many recognitions of beauty but within the reward itself. The mystery seemed to lie in the relation between the symbol itself and the unspokenness of its meaning. Naomi Wolf explores the untold story of this symbolic recognition of beauty and how this image of beauty has been used against women:

> 'Beauty' is a currency system like the gold standard. Like any economy, it is determined by politics, and in the modern age in the West it is the last, best belief system that keeps male dominance intact. In assigning value to women in a vertical hierarchy according to a culturally imposed physical standard, it is an expression of power relations in which women must unnaturally compete for resources that men have appropriated for themselves. (Wolf, 1991, p. 12)

Beauty as economy is a metaphor by which we live. Lakoff and Johnson hold:

> . . .Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. . . .
>
> Then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 3)
>
> The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. (Lakoff and Johnson, 1990, p. 5)

Exploring the metaphor "beauty as economy" becomes insightful when disclosing hidden meanings or the taken for

granted way in which we go about thinking, experiencing and living out this metaphor. Actually this particular metaphor is known as "metonymy" whereby human qualities are given to things that are not human.

Our economy is competitive, based on a supply and demand which is subject to change at any given moment in time because it is privately managed. And, of course, there is always the inescapable threat of the "law of diminishing returns" whereby no matter how attractive the product or model, additional units will give diminishing satisfaction. An example would be: "She is just another pretty face." This is an extremely frightening realization for one's identity to be based, specified and determined.

Metonymy functions actively in our culture: THE PART FOR THE WHOLE; namely, THE FACE FOR THE PERSON. This notion of a parts mentality robs our bodies and imaginations of our true personhood or of our wholeness as persons and becomes grounded in our everyday experience which generally involves direct physical or causal associations. The PART FOR WHOLE metonymy emerges from our experiences with the way in which parts in general relate to wholes.(Lakoff and Johnson, 1990, p. 39-40)

"Beauty is as beauty does." "Beauty is only skin deep."

Hence, this recognition of beauty had as much to do with my behavior as it did with my appearance. It was a symbol of appropriate female behavior. Certainly, my behavior was

immediately connected to an image of what most would call "the last of the Southern Belles." Historically, an image which legitimated the dominant plantation system of slavery and kept it in tact. (Harrison, 1985, p. 50) In a culture which actively promotes and insists on privilege for only a select few cannot experience life in its fullness but can only contribute to its downfall.

> Inferiorized people discover themselves as symbols manipulated in the transmission of the dominant culture. Their objective identity lives beyond their control; the image of self, institutionalized by cultural agents, exists alien to their own experience and self-expression. The ongoing, emergent lives of people are confronted by a 'representation' which exists only as an object for the other.(Adam, 1978, p. 31)

As described by the other, I was quiet, poised, stately, and as I would say, submissive and compliant to the curriculum; participating in and conforming to those activities that were exclusively designated for women--the secretarial curriculum. This curriculum is and has been designed to excessively focus on behavioral competencies which include women's special nature and special sphere of competence. These competencies are directly and solely related to objective, measurable skills by which secretaries are defined:

> Typewriters were defined as appropriate for women by being associated with feminine interests and skills: sewing, playing the piano, the nimble fingers that were supposed to result from these activities.(Pringle, 1989, p. 174)

Quite naturally, I, the symbolic bearer of femininity, was assigned this practice of proper behavior. Thus, I became as a mannequin; unable to experience my own experience as a human being, a person worthy of respect and dignity. I found no space in which preferences could be released, uncertainties confronted, desires given voice or no vantage point for interpreting my own lived life.

Interestingly enough, this year during "Secretaries Week" a local area survey revealed what secretaries want most is the same thing most human beings want: Respect and Dignity.

> The dualistic character of our age is shown particularly clearly in its relation to work. . .
>
> The nature of work itself is perverted in the modern world by the divorce of technical means from value ends, I-It from I-Thou. (Friedman, 1960, p. 119)

I find no evidence of concern for the character or quality of one's life in a curriculum based on scientific management whereby human beings are divided into stations of an either/or alternative. This curriculum serves only as a mask for the interest of those who, for whatever reason, seek power for its own sake. "Power without faithfulness is life without meaning."(Friedman, 1960, p. 119) This curriculum denigrates all of humankind and manifests itself in acts of violence and destruction.

I yearned to escape the vacuous fate of uniformity, of this one-dimensional, predetermined definition of who and what

I must be. But how does one battle a phantom? I was set up to fail by the invisible majority. This notion of failure has to do with what was predetermined as essential for me to know; this factual knowledge base did not contain any wisdom. Neither did it contain the cultural capital necessary for me to become a wide awake person influencing my direction toward realization, decision nor authentication. Instead, it kept me in place. This description of failure also connects with how my thoughts were controlled by an inability to language my given predicament. The painfulness of this confusion, the personal struggle and the damage created by "the grip of incomprehensible power" is still beyond my grasp. As a young seventeen year old, my expectations of myself in relation to the dreams of my family and the educational sieve were devastating.

My self-identity had been premised upon my "looks," so I remained vulnerable to outside approval. There was a distinct contradiction in all of this, a gap between this ideology and my actual experience. My identity was remote from the reality of my life, my family upbringing and the value of each human life. The tension from living on the boundary line of two separate and distinct realities had taught me much about the inequities of life. For some to live so abundantly and contentedly while hundreds of others struggled for minimal existence was absurd and an unacceptable situation.

Was I to remain a mere beauty so that the dominant culture could remain status quo? Would I remain silenced by a stereotype of either a beauty-without-intelligence; allowed a body but not a mind? Or, could I envision intelligence-without-beauty? This matter became extremely powerful when trying to meet standards set by the culture as to whom the privilege few would be; those who would gain upward mobility within the system of public space. I have lived in an unacknowledged resistance for the past thirty years.

Once again, standardized tests for college gave the criteria and justification to prove I was unfit for the academy; I was sorted by the system because my curriculum, the cult of femininity, was of no value. The power of this determination resided in place; where I would be or not be and who my friends would be or not be. Friends became an even greater problem because they could now depart for the halls of the ivy league academy while I, quite like Cinderella, the pious, hard-working beauty would keep the homefires burning per chance Prince Charming would arrive and rescue me from my plight of the double bind. This was and still is my perception of an experience which I believe concerns choice, a forced choice. However, it is here that I struggle with the inevitable dilemma of my own "complicity with oppression."

Needless to say, competition was intense during the sixties; there were so many of us vying for what was now expected of us all. This vital competition was and still

remains one of the most hurtful aspects of this structural problem. It appears competition is especially real for women in that it keeps them divided and apart. All of this relates to the social facticity of my middling class upbringing. Since middle class women have been sequestered from the world, isolated from one another by the pull of the double bind, their heritage submerged with each generation, they become even more dependent on cultural models and are more likely to be imprinted by them. Therefore, the experience of alienation becomes acute, and the cyclical nature perpetuates itself.

> The transmission of systems of meaning across generations occurs through a multiplicity of agents. At the most basic level, cultural transmission is the practice of language. It is people speaking to one another, parents to children, individuals to peers. The accumulation of knowledge is an accretion of tried methods for living, an enrichment of perception, a developing power over given reality. Increasingly complex societies develop special carriers of tradition; the received wisdoms of the common stock of knowledge become less common in distribution and accessibility. Educational institutions, the electronic media, churches, and social environments increasingly differentiated by class, locale, gender, occupation, etc., come to distribute ideas unequally.(Adam, 1978, p. 30)

My Family Circle, My Heritage

My mother was a public school secretary and my dad a mechanic for Burlington Industries. Because of this influence, it just made good "common sense" for me to be pragmatic with life and my lifework. No artist in our family; my mother would not even listen to it. I can distinctly

remember her taking the sketch pad right out of my feminine hands. But, of course, piano lessons were acceptable to her; she enjoyed music tremendously, especially the radio. As a consequence, I took piano lessons throughout my school years and managed to design most of my clothes in order to continue my desire for art. I enjoyed looking at different fabrics and creating fashions from them. Since textiles was a main industry in the South, there were many fabric stores from which to choose cloth.

After many years and only now, do I have a better grasp of my mother's attitude and actions toward me. A part of how she thought about me had to do with what it means to be a woman in a culture where connected histories have been withheld. There was an uncertainty we had in common but shyly never confided in each other. This notion of disconnected silences and making connections through our mothers may often be for many the truest answer to a question that really matters. Hence, as a teenager our relation was distant and at times difficult. I wanted to escape her constant prodding and comparisons of me with my friends up the street. Unfortunately, she was a victim of the Great Depression; hard times in the cotton mills and poverty in the South. All of these, plus the added pain of abuse had long been her legacy; therefore, security was of utmost importance to her.

My father, who was of German descent, came from a family of stoic migrant farm workers. Consequently, the suppressed

artist inside him was noncommittal about what I chose to do. His main concern was that I understand the difference between "want" and "need" in life and that I obtain a good education. This was something he had not been able to accomplish because of frequent family moves and poverty.

From Victoria Byerly's Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls: Personal Histories of Womanhood and Poverty in the South, [1986], I for the first time came to comprehend my family heritage; the loss of time is irretrievable. Even though I had heard family stories many times throughout my lifetime, the concrete experiences and commonality of all these women's voices placed in a particular context made "life on the mill hill" a reality for me. From Katie Geneva Cannon's words came meaningful remembrances of my mother's mother, my grandmother, Mama Madge, who worked her entire lifetime in the cotton mill and who made her home with my family, my mom, dad and me. As Katie C's Grandma Rosa, she too taught me much ". . .about patience, a lot about just what it means to be a human being."(Byerly, 1986, p. 32)

I can see her yet, climbing the small hill which led from the mill to our Chevrolet (early 50's) to take her home. She was a tall, slim, well-dressed woman who looked superior in her shirtwaist dress and who gave no signs of mill work. Her hair was always well groomed and her pocketed apron was without fail neatly tied around her waist. This apron was of peculiar interest to me, because I knew it contained her

curiously small work tools and most of all it held candy for me. I am still amazed at how she, a widow during the depression years, raised two children on mill wages and maintained her sense of self so well; this is not only beyond my comprehension but also very much a part of me. When she retired from the mill, she did splendid domestic work at our house which included loving and caring for me. She lived and worked in our home until her health failed; and after seven long years of suffering from dementia, she died. Indeed, she taught me much about what it means to be human and how to become a challenger, to face the world, to survive!

Now as my mother retells the story of her childhood experiences of the mill village, her poised demeanor and composure dissolve. Even though sixty years have passed, the pain of an unjust and cruel situation remains sharp. Here is my mother's revealing story of the Southern textile trauma:

> I was born October 30, 1925 in Cherryville, NC of Gaston County. My father William M. Ballard was a merchant in the grocery business. He had been rather successful in business even though it was 'hard times.' He had built a beautiful roomy house in which I was only privileged to live for a short time of five years with him, my mother Madge Putnam Ballard and a brother, Adkin Ballard, age 14 years when my father died, October 21, 1930.
>
> Shortly after Daddy's death my mother's brother took our house over and moved us over to a mill village house of four rooms and employed my mother there with the NuWay Spinning Company. My uncle was superintendent of the plant. I was only five years old in 1930 when we moved to the mill village. My mother had no money and had to work from 6 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening in the mill. One of my daddy's cousins, Nellie moved in with us and looked after

me for a while. Nellie lived with us until about the year 1933 which made me eight years old. Nellie then married and moved to Shelby, NC.

By this time my uncle was superintendent of three different mills. He lived on a small Southern plantation outside of town several miles away from the mill. He transferred my mother from NuWay Spinning to Howell Manufacturing Co. which was a mile away for her to walk. At this time, Franklin D. Roosevelt had changed the number of work hours to an eight hour work day. She took a second shift job at the Howell Mill and her hours were from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. With this job change and with shorter working hours, it gave my mother time with me in the morning and from the elementary school I attended I was able to walk home to lunch with her.

Of course from 2 p.m. until 10 p.m. I was on my own. For a child of eight it was only natural to mingle and associate with all the kids in the village. I learned to play with the good and the bad, not really bad but some were vulgar and abusive. Most of my friends had some of the same experience as I.

My brother Adkin was working in a mill in Clover, SC where our grandfather J.C. Ballard was superintendent of a mill there. Adkin often times came home when he could get transportation. I was about 12 years of age when my mother was transferred by her brother back to NuWay Spinning. She was moved back where work was more in demand for a different kind of yarn. Her shift hours were from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. She had many sides of yarn to keep spinning and to keep the "ends up" going in the machines. If they had too many ends down they were sometimes scolded and shouted at and fired to keep them up by different overseers. The sounds of machines were very loud and to speak you had to really raise your voice in a loud tone. She was given about 10 to 15 minutes to eat depending on the way the yarn was running.

There was a lot of cotton dust surrounding her frames and sometimes oil was spilled on the floor from the oilers who oiled the machines. In 1934, Mother fell in the oil and fractured her back. She was hospitalized for nine months in Charlotte in Presbyterian Hospital. I had to go to Shelby, NC and stay with my grandmother. I did not see her

> but one time during this time, and I did not get to go to school that year either.
>
> Still her brother, serving in the position he was, did not let her put any pressure on the insurance company for the fall and not much compensation was paid for us to live on. At age 14, the school year was 1939-40, and I was going into high school. We had only eleven grades to complete for graduation. In the ninth grade I made honor student and continued through high school.
>
> I was old enough now to get a work card. I first took a "part-time" job with "Roses 5 & 10." I went in after school and worked during holidays. This job really interested me and I enjoyed it very much.
>
> It was in the spring of 1942, and after school was out my uncle was to give me a job at NuWay Spinning on a full time basis for the summer. I needed the work to support graduation expense coming up my senior year. However, the class ring had to be purchased at the end of my junior year. My mother wanted so much to buy it for me but there was no money at our house. Mother suggested that I approach my uncle and ask for a loan on my first pay check at the mill. He loaned me $13.
>
> When I drew my first check of $18, I repaid him the debt. I graduated from Cherryville High School in April 1943. Mother was so proud the day I received my diploma. So many times, it was hard for her to meet the needs of life and I was so tempted to dropout of school and help her but she would not hear to it because she did not want me to work in the mill.

In Byerly's description of the mill houses and how well they were kept, I could not help but remember my dad. He maintained these homes. He and my mother had built a small home, but he was on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week for the Rhyne-Houser Mill and the workers who lived in the mill village. He repaired electrical and plumbing problems, broken pipes frozen from severely cold weather. He

would leave during the night in frigid weather to crawl under one of those "well-kept houses." He also decorated the plant during holiday seasons, especially Christmas time. He was responsible for the decorations and Santa treat to be given to the children of the mill employees. One year he asked me to play the piano, Christmas Carols. I was so nervous, but he was so extremely proud.

While the mill was still locally owned by the Rhynes and Housers, he was their personal slave. They felt free to call him any time to repair things within their fine homes and to even hang pictures, their oil paintings, mirrors and the like within their Southern mansions beyond Old Post Road. He had a natural sense of harmony and balance which these people recognized. What more could one ask than to be developed, to be recognized for one's talents?

After Burlington Industries bought the Rhyne-Houser Mill this type of local patronizing stopped. He was given duties as a supervisor over the machine shop and began to wear a tie to work. This was certainly new to him and somewhat frightening because he now had the responsibility of much paperwork. He told me his English grammar might not be up to par so he started his GED at Gaston College. At this time, I was teaching school and was so proud of his courage.

Many of my dad's shop employees were black and were his dearest friends. I remember Earnest. As Byerly reports, "even race, that most central and immutable determinant of

southern history, seems curiously diminished in its power to dispel the sense of solidarity and continuity these personal histories project." My dad was truly his brother's brother. He seemed to understand black culture before I even knew anything about the treachery of racism.

My first trip inside a cotton mill was with my dad. In every account not only in Byerly's personal histories but also in Eisler's, The Lowell Offering, [1977] each person speaks of this experience as terribly frightening. I, too, was terrified of the machinery; its closeness and loud noise was deafening. The machines were arranged in narrow rows and they were operating at terrific speed. My fear, even though I was simply walking through the plant, was of being caught inside one of these fast-operating machines. This was truly an unforgettable experience but one that I am proud to have had. How much I do respect those who worked hard long hours and suffered from suffocation in those mills to support their families.

Later, when Burlington Mill closed because of low profits, as mills so often do, I saw my Daddy cry. I remember this day clearly both the time and the place of the announcement. My parents and I were renovating what is now my small home. Mother and I were inside the house which was their first home and my nursery. He came in and sat down. The expression on his face looked as if the world had stopped revolving. This immediately caught our attention because he

generally was smiling about something. But this day was certainly different. His workshop, which still stands on the far side of town, was so much a part of his daily life, his self-identity, and his dignity. A portion of him died that day and only now do I understand the significance of that moment. From my dad's life I have learned the meaning of courage, commitment, justice, humility, compassion and the essence of a life lived in search of the true.

Devastation, College and the Dominant Ideology

I would like to examine by remembrance the contradictory experience of being a seventeen year old girl who was much loved by her family and the devastating impact of the dominant ideology upon my life during the sixties. Remembering becomes an almost impossible task for me as returning to this period brings forth anew the pain and confusion of an unconscious pursuit of making sense of my life confounded by a "slave morality" of submissiveness and gratitude. My capacity to demystify my circumstance somehow has something to do with human freedom, the power to choose and the power to act.

> The individual wonders at himself, that he cannot learn to forget but clings relentlessly to the past; however far and fast he may run, this chain runs with him. . .He says 'I remember' and envies the animal, who at once forgets and for whom every moment really dies.(Nietzsche, 1983, p. 61)

My parents had worked hard and lived frugally in order to have the necessary funds available when the time came to send

me to college. Contrary to their belief, they assumed I was receiving the "good education" necessary for college entrance. My grades throughout my schooling had certainly been above average so the problem as it was then interpreted by the school and its counselors was that I probably could not bear the academic rigor that college would require.

I felt worthless, less than human, because of this pronouncement of a determining power over my life mapping the direction it could or could not take. The disappointment and embarrassment of being a beauty without a brain sent spiraling messages of inferiority across my being, a branding message which would label my existence among others. The label read loud and clear for all to see and hear: "looks good on the outside but be aware the inside may be empty." This signal of skepticism influences the painful distance of alienation.

However, my family received some literature in the mail from a nearby college which was supported by our church. If they would pay a particular fee, the college would permit me to study during the summer months and from this determine my ability to survive. The tuition was enormous, especially for my parents. At the end of the summer my grades had been satisfactory, but another final test had been given and as things turned out "there was no room in the inn" for me. As I remember there were several athletes in this special class, and of course each of them was allowed admittance. Their names had been posted. They had been chosen.

My parents had lost their money and probably their confidence in me to endure whatever it took to succeed in college. After all, no one in my family had ever attended college. How could the church be wrong? Had I associated with the wrong people during the summer? Undoubtedly, I did not know how to study? Something about me must be weak; was it my brain or was I morally unfit or both? These were my thoughts as I felt my life floundering, floating helplessly before my eyes as if in an unreal world of a dreadful "Never, Never Land."

I climbed the long winding staircase to Dr. Underwood's office the last evening I was on campus only to find him gone. Once my parents arrived to pick me up, we climbed the same flight together. He was still not there. The ugly, old sour man; where was he? Would my parents believe my story? Had he forgotten our appointment, or had he told a lie? This was even harder for me to believe. Where was he? We were to discuss my test results. He could not be reached! My body was in a numb panic; my hands were cold and wet. Was this really happening to me, or would I wake up from this terrible nightmare? I felt deceived; anger and sadness filled my spirit with rebellion. We left for home, our home on the edge of freedom.

Thus, in the fall of 1965, I began school at Gaston College, a community college where I now teach. While at Gaston, I took courses in the secretarial science program as

well as the college transfer program. Because of the overpopulation of students my same age and the newness of the community college concept, the transfer courses were academically demanding. I struggled to learn how to study and how to perform the many competencies within the secretarial program with a high degree of efficiency. Then, as now, the secretarial program was all female; therefore, my education was filled as usual with particular gender-related indoctrinations along with a self-exemplified Puritan work ethic. Indeed, much of this time, I felt once again separated from all of my former acquaintances, a sense of helplessness continued to pervade my senses and a lack of belonging in the world. It seems we all must live within this ambiguity of a partial freedom, partial power, and partial knowledge.

The congruent timeliness of the birth of the community college and my life continues to present the gift of hope. I am always amazed when newness occurs out of the midst of turmoil. My grief during this time concerning life and my place in this world had been profound. Much of this grief had to do with my numbness, my inability to language reality. Hidden behind this deadly silence lay an undenying guilt of a failed human being full of weariness, fear and dread. Much of this was intricately connected to this lack of speech. Where there is no speech one must live in despair and it seems that battles for definitions of reality always live close to power. (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 74)

Ironically, as I struggled for identity so did the community college. Either/Or questions arose. Were they a continuation of the public school philosophy? Or, were they a truncated version of a four year institution? Thus, the unique, an overlapping features of the community college came into question. It did not fit into the hierarchial structure of either the secondary or postsecondary institutions. In contrast, its egalitarian doors would remain open to all the masses of nontraditional students which included me. (Palinchak, 1973, p. 102)

Later in 1967, I transferred to Lenoir Rhyne College in Hickory where I graduated in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in Business Education. My brain had been successfully pressed into a pragmatic mold; therefore, I did not waste one productive moment. My education had been geared for something gender appropriate, useful and secure--teaching. I began my career instructing rural secretarial science students in a newly constructed consolidated high school in Lawndale, NC.

Sunk inside myself, I felt it necessary to wear horn-rimmed glasses and a conservative wig. This would hide my hippie, youthful appearance. I knew image was important, and it would provide an easy way to create what I believed necessary--an acceptable distance between my students and me. After all, I was just twenty-one, and proper behavior with a "dress for success" image was imperative for a beginning business education teacher.

Years passed within my early teaching career, and I began to feel intuitively that something significant was missing within my story as a teacher. The textbooks were not only boring but contradictory and confusing. What did they say or did not say that bothered me so? They seemed so shallow, a narrow focus with no real depth for conversation. And, those huge state department notebooks "filled to the brim" with behavioral objectives, pre-tests, post-tests and hundreds of competencies. How convenient for me and wonderfully smart of them; I would never again have to be spontaneous, create an original lesson plan or even be present for that matter. There were enough ready-made, plug-in plans and tests for the remainder of all our days.

I was really this naive and rightfully so. The power of the invisible majority is given within my story. Just because the people with the hardware and the printing press had told me the world was a certain way, I had believed them. And, why should I have believed otherwise? Had not my democratic education afforded the freedom of critical inquiry? Or, had my education taught submission and compliance to the cultural status quo?

> There are beings whose life slips by in an infantile world because, having been kept in a state of servitude and ignorance, they have no means of breaking the ceiling which is stretched over their heads. Like the child, they can exercise their freedom, but only within this universe which has been set up before them, without them. (DeBeauvoir, 1948, p. 37)

As my feelings of inadequacy began to mount concerning the curriculum, in 1976 I began my Master's degree at Appalachian State University. I continued to teach while attending classes during the summer months. In 1978 I finished Beta Gamma Sigma in Business and Economics. This high achievement was genuinely a mystery to me; however, I had finally been made to feel "O.K." At last, I had been confirmed by a culture which insists that we must demonstrate that we can do something well which is valued:

> We are having to be prodded to think that you and I are O.K. because we live in a culture that does not say that we are O.K. until and unless we demonstrate that we can do something well that is valued. In a word, we live in a world where personal dignity is not inherent and inalienable but is negotiable and problematic. (Purpel, 1989, p. 34)

With increased self-confidence, I began teaching part time for a local community college, Cleveland Community College. And, at some point in 1979-80, I began to teach part time for Gaston College. This was one step forward in reaching my long term goal--to return to Gaston and to teach. And, in 1984 I became a full-time teacher for Gaston.

Although I had reached my goal as a teacher, still unanswered questions plagued me. Since technology had vastly changed the nature of the office technology curriculum--moving from typewriters to computerized word processing, to database filing systems and to spreadsheet recordkeeping, I began working on my Ed.S. Degree in Computer Education at Barry

University in Miami Shores. It was after obtaining this degree that I became more aware of the problem. It just seemed the curriculum was too cold, too decided, too fast--lending itself only to the training of people ignoring their education; thus blocking the possibility for students to come more consciously to life. In this way, I believed, it seemed amoral. Not only did it deny our democratic ideal, but it also reinforced the existing political and social settings of hierarchy and thus our fragmented selves. David Bohm, an eminent physicist, says that we have been "guided by illusory perceptions and shaped by fragmentary thought." He defines our situation further. . ."To be confused about what is different and what is not, is to be confused about everything."(Dooling, 1985, p. 3) Therefore, my response toward this hurtful divisiveness of false differences and the waste of possibilities boiled down to a mush pudding of false samenesses was my connection to others, my students.

In Search for Being, for Wholeness

> **And perhaps the identifying signs may be sought for (like the moon in its reflection in a puddle) in those, more accessible to us, of the anti-process, that which causes our fragmentation. D.M. Dooling, Parabola, 1985.**

In reaction to this situation I recently interviewed five female students who are currently enrolled in the Office Technology curriculum at Gaston College. My purpose was meaning making by listening as these students reflected aloud

on past and present experiences and considered them in relation to the significance in their life as a female student, woman, mother, family member, worker and learner.

These interviews were based on the assumption that it is possible to discover intentions and meanings of other persons through our connections with them, through their words as they communicate, and through our knowledge of our own words and actions as we see them reflected in others. I believe that one finds mutual confirmation through our own experience; and through hearing the repeated experiences of others, one can come as close as possible to "imagining the real" about other human beings. This means quite concretely to imagine what another person is "wishing, feeling, perceiving, and thinking."(Friedman, 1960, p. 82)

It was my intent that these dialogues illuminate the realities of everyday life in the community college for the female office technology student. And, implications for future curriculum for the female student may be revealed through the words of students as they talk about their experience. An ultimate goal would be to "unconceal," to create clearings, spaces in the midst of things whereby decisions could be made.

Just as important would be the possibility of: "In the full making present something of the character of what is imagined and is joined to the act of imagining."(Friedman, 1960, p. 82) For it is here in the act and art of "making

present" that the "inmost growth of the self" occurs. This growth occurs not in our relation to ourself but in the making present of another self. And, in the knowledge that, one is made present in his own self by the other. Buber holds: "'Adult education is concerned with character and character is not above situation, but is attached to the cruel, hard demand of this hour.'"(Friedman, 1960, p. 183) "The great character acts from the whole of his substance and reacts in accordance with the uniqueness of every situation." "' . . .What is sought is a truly reciprocal conversation in which both sides are full partners.'"(Friedman, 1960, p. 182)

As I began to listen to the voices of my students certain themes did finally begin to emerge: the double bind or the divided self, badges of ability, self-sacrifice, freedom and a flawed humanism enlarged by technology. It seems the overriding concern was that of respect and dignity in one's work and in one's life.

Even though the lives of each of these women varied in detail, there were interwoven threads of common experience and existential struggle represented in all of them. First, and most obviously, they were all women who had experienced the contradictions of the double bind. Each of these women had been either a mother of caregiver to young children at some point in her life. And, each had been forced to step outside the domestic sphere into the public domain for various reasons. Here, in the public sphere, these women had

experienced an inherent moral dilemma of lifestyle contradictions, or stereotypes of--"being respectable versus not respectable"--for which they had no language to express their situatedness. This distinction between domestic sphere and public sphere does not exist for prototypes of men. For example, sexual harassment on the job is seen by some as the price women pay for working outside the home. The social penalty of being "damned if I do and damned I if don't" represents the contradiction of the double bind which is echoed within their stories:

> Well, when I was in high school my parents didn't steer me to further education. They just kind of steered me to get married, you have children and that is the thing to do--not get more education. So, the year that I graduated I got married. And the next year I had a little girl; and then the next year I had a little boy. So, I had an instant family. Not really having a lot of education, there were not a lot of skills that I had to get a good job. and I really didn't take my high school education serious. I went to the mill and I started working in the mill. You have to do what you have to do.

Another student:

> I had intentions to become a legal secretary but because I had a child at a young age and I was trying to work and everything---then I got married. This interfered with my life of coming to school.

Still another:

> I got married out of high school. And I worked at Belmont Heritage in different positions--production controller, section person which in textiles means you have the floor. I quit there the summer before

> my son started kindergarten because I wanted to be active in the school. Take him to school; pick him up, and do all the things that needed to be done. And then that and volunteer work was all I did until my husband died.

In each of these testimonies I heard the familiar story of the "divided self" over the whole of society. These stories "poignantly convey the inner feelings and the disconnected language of humans being pulled apart."(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 207) There is nothing soothing about the act of dividing self. It creates terrible pain and suffering because self is caught in a double bind. This becomes a schizophrenic situation of a sort whereby, in this case, a female person finds herself trying to obey two conflicting commands at once. This is found primarily when women are trying to earn acceptance or love by doing what is thought respectable or appropriate in the eyes of the significant other and society. The double bind expresses an impossibility confronting the female student--you must work outside the home; and at the same time you are expected to perform your domestic responsibilities. Even though the students did not use the term "double bind" to describe their dilemma, they certainly had felt its impact upon their life.

Language which consists of words such as the "double bind" is a tool for representing experience. And, tools contribute to creative endeavors only when used. But, language alone does not lead automatically to reflective thought. "In order for reflection to occur, the oral and

written forms of language must pass back and forth between persons who both speak and listen or read and write--sharing, expanding, and reflecting on each other's experiences." (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, Tarule, 1986, p. 26) Interchanges, such as these, lead to ways of knowing that foster connections; and without tools or rituals for representing their experiences people also remain isolated from the self.

So what has been our response as women and as teachers of women to a class system that demands a high percentage of its workers to be female? Have we included experiences which encourage reflexive/reflective thought that would therefore enable these women to awaken and to become more self-assured persons within the community. After all, is this not what business people desire of future office workers? What has been our attitude toward a system which continues to pay women less simply because their time is considered less valuable? Sennett and Cobb believe this to be especially true:

> . . .in offices, where it seems right for secretaries to perform services for their superior, not because they respect him as self-sufficient or because they are awed by his abilities, but because the superior's work is considered more valuable than her typing, and so his time more valuable than hers.(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 265)

Has our office curriculums encouraged a divided self or authentic self vis-a-vis unauthentic self? Or, more clearly, are we not more authentic in areas whereby we feel no

judgments are being passed? Must we continue to play dead emotionally by hiding behind competencies which only depersonalize our life by controlling our behavior, ignoring our lived experience and therefore blocking the possibility for us to come more authentically to life? Do we not continue to adhere to doctrines which teach the rules of compliance for "dressing for success?" Should we not begin to discuss how to stop translating the institution's judgments of our ability into parts of our lives that should never be judged? Now more than ever, the degree of worthiness granted a person has come to be, a measurement of her productivity, a personal reflection of the social uses she makes of her time.

Each of these students understood the notion of productivity in relation to her ability to be valued as a worker. Three out of five of these students had worked in textile mills and clearly understood the importance of work efficiency. And, for this reason, there is an absorbed sense of skill transfer from the mill to the office. Even though office work represents an upward step in status for them, the production mentality remains familiar and becomes enhanced by the challenge technology presents:

> Well, I had to work with the management and the employees. I had to set up the schedule. And meet the schedule as to when how long we would have to run something and get it out on time. When the machines would have to be changed over and things like that. Basically I met production schedules--to make certain the shipments got out on time.

It seems that every question of identity as an image of social place in a hierarchy is also a question of social value. The medium that unites self identity and personal value is human activity. This medium transmits a powerful message which says something about the person and how their presence becomes a projection into the world. The meanings women infer about themselves in relation to received messages about the nature of their labor or their work, center around issues of the social production of value. So, for the factory worker as well as the clerical worker, it is believed that productive work is valuable. That is, it is the work in general as opposed to any specific skill that gives women a sense of legitimacy. Therefore, in the office curriculum, the development of powers in the person, aside from intrinsic goodness, is oriented towards making people as productive as possible within the terms of the existing society.

Today, more than ever--because of advanced technology, a secretary is known by her ability, not as an abstract essence, but as a concrete demonstration of how well she can manipulate the computer (means) in order to more efficiently produce information faster (ends). This ability to produce nourishes feelings of self-worth and security within the social system:

> I lost my husband in an accident about two years ago and my whole life changed after that. I knew I had to go on with my life because I had two small children. I didn't really want to go on but I knew I had to for them. I decided to get myself centered into something else. I wanted to get into something where I could get a better job. A job

> within the office area where I could make decent money.

The phrase "decent money" intrigues me. I believe she means enough money to provide for her family and at the same time provide her with a sense of self-worth--a worthy, respectable living. As we know it, a consciousness of human worth is a consciousness of self that possesses a certain uniqueness which stands out from the crowd. She seeks the "badge of ability" not so much for herself but for that of her children. Therefore, if you feel inadequate and unfulfilled in demonstration of your own worth, thinking you are doing it for the good of someone else makes performance legitimate for you. In other words, if wearing "the badge of ability" is alienating, wear it so the rewards will give a person whom you love a better life. It is through self-sacrifice that women, in particular, attempt to deal with shame which relates to our inability to do something which we feel is valued.

As explained by Sennett and Cobb, shame is much different from guilt which implies wrongdoing. We can come to closure with guilt through different types of compensation; however, to expunge shame is a totally different matter. Shame becomes a circular self denial which manifests itself within our identity. Our ability to produce says "I'm OK" because I can do something which is valued by society. Paradoxically, our unfortunate circumstance remains; these badges require women to become invisible:

> But when you go through life and you get out there in the field working you realize how important it is to have that education. Because if you do want to change jobs, and go onto something else you need it. Most companies now want that degree; it is not like it used to be. I have stressed this to my children. Cause I know what it was like to feel trapped. And, you are just making enough money to get by. And you feel like you can't change jobs because you are really afraid to.

According to Sennett and Cobb:

> In the last half-century, the Census shows that the greatest growth of white-collar positions has been among such routine tasks as filing, typing, document-processing and the like. These low-level white collar jobs, seen usually as 'appropriate' for women, now claim that single largest group of workers. During the same period, moreover, there has been a peculiar growth of the professions. If special ability is becoming more important in productive work, one would expect the professions to be expanding and becoming more variegated. Yet the Census shows professions expanding mostly at such supposedly low levels as grade-school teaching; these changes account for almost all of the proportional increase of professional work, and these positions, too, have been filled largely by women.(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 174)

Sennett and Cobb continue by pointing toward difficult and conflicting explanations of the current emphasis placed on mind:

> . . .when 'mind jobs,' as Ivar Berg describes them, are not the growth leaders of the work force. The problem is also more complex, because white-collar labor has grown principally in low-status, routine-skill occupations. . .
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> The increase in low-level white-collar work allows less independence, and offers less pay than skilled manual labor which is partially dissolving the traditional symbolic meaning of 'moving up' to the office from the factory . . .

> . . . In 1910 an office clerk usually made something like twice as much as an unskilled manual laborer; he tended to have more job security and could look upon his position in relation to the vast majority of working people with assured sense of doing more skilled and privilege tasks. This has now changed.(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 175)
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> Nonetheless, white-collar work still retains an important status difference from manual labor. Jobs like filing, document processing and similar bureaucratic tasks are simple, routine, and easily mastered, yet educational requirements for such jobs have become more and more elaborate. In the words of the U.S. Manpower Commission:
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> > A young woman who is hired to type letters is increasingly required to have some college experience before she gets the job, even though the skills required for good job performance could have been mastered when she was barely adolescent. (Sennett and Cobb, 1972, pp. 175-176)

However, the correspondences and self-contradictions become even more apparent when one observes the uses of technology in office work. The advent of personal computers has not eliminated office work positions but has shifted them around and perhaps in some cases increased them. But, current assumptions by employers is that an increased amount of education is needed to complete these tasks. Sennett and Cobb comment that "it is almost as though mind becomes more important as the uses for mind in new jobs become less . . .". Accordingly, they pose the problem in larger terms:

> . . . Why are white-collar and blue-collar work both subject to an escalation of employment credentials that has nothing to do with the substance of work?(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 176)

Referring to the assumptions of employers, Sennett and Cobb comment.

> What they assume is what our culture more generally assumes: Mind is productive. . .(p. 177) The certification of mind through formal education is, then, a necessity to keep class inequality alive in a changing set of productive relations. Even more important, by making people feel disparity between what they ought to be as persons as a result of being educated and what they experience directly in their new work, such certifications persuade them that the onus rests on themselves.(p. 180)

A Gaston College students reports:

> So all the while I'm moving up and my pay is moving down. Because the money is in the hard work. So, I went from $9 an hour in knitting to $5.65 to the collar department.
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> One thing I think--even if you have a degree you need to keep growing because the world is growing. And it is going to leave you behind. Even if it is just another word processing or another skill in Lotus or Database; it really doesn't have to be computers just any kind of skill that will help you grow. Technology just keeps changing. You must move with it or get left behind.

Currently, competitive technical software demands the focused attention of both students and teachers in office education programs as each becomes more distracted from ordinary life. Word processing technologies continue to compete at such a rapid pace that talk of formal education in such courses become a laughable absurdity. Textbooks emerge outdated to the marketplace while teachers stand overwhelmed and confronted by students and the business community. As the format of these texts increasingly resemble the domestic values and indoctrinations of recipe books, the emphasis

placed on how well one can follow instructions. Their underlying means works toward an end--the application of technical rules and procedures. The problem with this according to Apple and Weiss is that it removes curricular knowledge from the "sphere of democratic discourse and shared understandings," and reduces it to ". . .instrumental ideologies" which tend to "replace ethical and political awareness and debate."(Apple and Weis, 1983, p. 6) From this situation, business education teachers attempt "to stay on top of it" while continuing to convince and delight themselves with feelings that "the newest is the best" and "they can do it all." R. D. Laing depicts an "ontological security" in which human beings have to achieve a feeling that self can survive whatever it encounters in the world. He describes a person who is "ontologically secure" as "open to new, disruptive, even painful experience; he has achieved the strength to become vulnerable."(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 201) Sennett and Cobb declare that somehow, there is something missing here.

> Society imposes the necessity for defensiveness: in a hierarchical organization, to leave yourself open to the new experience the organization offers is to risk being wiped out or lost. Only a blind man, or someone who did indeed have 'false consciousness' of his own strength in relation to the organization, would take the risk. But getting from day to day is at least something one can trust.(Sennett and Cobb, 1972, p. 202)

It is from this self-protective frame of mind that I hear this voice:

> I want the ability to work for someone else in case that I can't make it on my own--enough money for my family. Because if you depend on someone else in life, you don't depend on yourself. That is the first thing you have to do--depend on yourself. Because women or men who depend on someone else to make it for them they are going to get let down. If not through divorce, it could be death. You never know. That is why it is important to have your own self established. So that you can make it for your own self in your own way for your kids--especially if you have kids for them also.

What happens to this person when something goes awry--a feeling that "nothing is left." However, she desires the security of feeling adequate, self-sufficient for her family. But there is a tension of doubt which frames her story. She wants to create conditions whereby freedom and dignity might appear and be maintained within a particular social position. Once again a dilemma--our society has at its base a mass of people who work with their hands and are socially unequal. This especially applies to secretarial work since it is closely linked with the keyboard; therefore, men find it difficult to envision themselves as secretaries. Consequently, keyboard workers have been separated from the promotional structures commonly called the "glass ceiling." As a result of this structural problem, generations of secretarial students have become indoctrinated by curriculums which promote compliance and submission. Courses on grooming and poise, a constant smile, and a willingness to manage

office tensions have been central themes. Clearly the regime is interested not in what people experience but in their behavior, which can be managed. Now I ask you, why should one class of human beings get a chance to develop weapons of self more than others? What about curriculums that encourage the ability to be me? I can be accepted for what I am--I'm not a shell! I've got stuff in me. From office technology curriculums teachers tend to "fill-up" students with facts maintained through competencies. And, because of this notion, students respond to questions like--What does the community college experience mean to you in your life?

> I am going to be more qualified, and it has made me a better person.

> The Enlightenment writers sought a humane society through means that came to aid the inhumanities of class. The prophets of a post-industrial society say those inhumanities will increase in the name of technological development. (Sennett and Cobb, p.262)

Surely I do not have to think of "flight from the modern world" to transcend a society based on validations of self through rewards for performance or on the linking of dignity to special ability. (Sennett and Cobb, p. 262) Can we not rid ourselves of standards of dignity in order to create an actual feeling of dignity threading one human being to another? Now, it seems, society injures human dignity in order to weaken people's ability to resist the limits of class which impose upon their freedom. This existential problem subjects a

person internally to a cross-fire of conflicting demands for solidarity and yet individual assertion of worth. How can we resolve these warring emotions or the either/or alternative? How does one attempt to establish freedom and dignity in the face of this contradiction? Here is the response from a young, attractive female who mentioned this contradiction:

> Well there was a lot of freedom there and there was a lot of young people. And people weren't hateful there. But the people that I worked with at Anvil Knit were older and a lot of times you would say good morning to somebody and they would bite your head off. That's what I couldn't understand. I felt burdened down working at Anvil. The people were ill, hateful and bitter. But then when I went to Anvil there were younger people and they were high spirited and wild. Not everybody but there were quite a few. I felt more at ease working there. I believe there was more jealously at Anvil Knit. They saw me as a threat. But at Ithaca, I was just another young person.

In Cobb's Afterward, he summarizes most eloquently:

> To talk of arming yourself, of the development of self-confidence, of self-development on the terms set by the existing society, is to talk about what seems possible in the society as what seems ipso facto legitimate. When the structure of society appears as permanent or beyond human control, when what human beings have created comes to seem immutable, "natural" transformation becomes individualized. How you are going to interpret the world moves to the front of consciousness, how you can transform it in accordance with your needs ceases to be a real question. American society is characterized by an appearance of permanence as a system, but by a reality of permeability by individual.
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> This permeability, however, has its own inherent limitations; the person does not come to exercise control over his situation, transforming the conditions of his or her life, but instead simply

> moves from one set of circumstances to another. Circumstances, the structure of society, remains and you move; and as a result, you leave situations, classes, structures as they are.
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> Thus, a community college student can be heard saying:
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> People look at me crazy when I say--if I didn't have to go to work I would just come here all the time until I ran out of things to take.

This student does not seem to feel particularly inadequate or insecure, plans to deal with the contradiction between her expectations of college life and its reality by moving from one major to another, staying in school creating a slightly different life style in order to survive with some sense of personal growth. Because she can see herself moving in society, she individually looks for another situation, rather than transforming the one she is in.

I genuinely enjoyed conducting these interviews even though it was a time-consuming process for all persons involved. However, I do believe it was time well spent. It allowed me the opportunity to come closer to my students and get a clearer understanding of them and their personal narratives. Through the process of active listening--hearing their words, processing their words within a given context and mirroring their words back to them--a connection was made and a certain rapport was created. Intentions and meanings of people's lives did become apparent throughout these meetings.

"All real living is in meeting," and I certainly experienced real living during these interviews. Here one can

find mutual confirmation in a curriculum which is characterized by a relation of mutuality, directness, presentness, intensity and of wholeness. This curriculum of inclusiveness is of the essence of the dialogical relations.

Silence, Courage and Sacrifice
An Intricate Struggle of Failing Relations

As a postscript to this writing, I must include two forgotten marriages and the miracle birth of my daughter, Lauren Michelle. How one could leave silent those events in a woman's life which distinguishes her from the remainder of society is understandable only in the realization of that which remains a source of mystery and pain.

In February of 1967 I eloped and was married in York, South Carolina, to a young man whom I had met while in school at Gaston College. We were both nineteen at the time. I can distinctly remember my anxiety concerning our age; we were so young, and I did not want to further disappoint or embarrass my parents. In reflection, my reasons for marriage at such an early age had to do with my Puritan upbringing. I was ready to have intimate relations with a man and felt marriage must precede such action.

Whether consciously, unconsciously or somewhere in between, I had hoped this relationship would eventually lead me out of my situatedness. This circumstance had to do with what it meant to struggle against confinement and constriction in what Virginia Woolf referred to as the "cotton wool of

life." In contrast, I yearned to know what it meant to live life fully conscious, to "image the real"; to break through the mere routine of a particular automatism, to search for openings, to seek out alternative ways of being in this world. Tacitly I knew to discover such openings would lead into unexplored territories toward spaces of newness, such places as those found within the imagination of C.S. Lewis's mirrored wardrobe which lead to the new land of Narnia, to other possibilities of perception a new perception of self and place within the world.

I longed to be treated with respect, to be listened to as an equal member with particular needs instead of an inept child only to be seen and not heard. Thus, I was resisting many things which I had decided were intolerable for I could imagine a better state of life and living, a positing of alternatives to mere passivity. It was my attempt to re-image, to make present what was absent, to "summon up" a condition that was not yet.

But, my new husband and I did not live together. Until this moment, I never questioned motives or decisions concerning this matter. Interestingly enough, I am still uncertain how this discrete decision was made. All I can remember is an overwhelming fear of not being able to finish college and of becoming pregnant. My marriage as escape route had not only led to another prison but also one which possessed new secret fears and silences. I can remember being

afraid to tell my parents and yet facing my dad's questions with guilt. Someone in his shop had seen the newspaper announcement, but gripped by my own anxiety I did not confess. Instead, I lived in constant fear of becoming pregnant. Little did I know that I was seriously ill and pregnancy would have been impossible.

Years passed as we became hippies, grew up and obtained teachers' degrees; we remarried in 1969 publicly in my home church. Therefore, it was sometime during the early seventies that I began to have serious difficulties with my health. Unknowingly, I had been suffering from a sizeable dermoid tumor which had attached itself to my left ovary and had been growing since my birth. The doctors speculated the tumor was the result of a misplaced cell; maybe I had been a twin.

Nonetheless, at the time of my symptoms, the doctors diagnosed I was pregnant even though all pregnancy tests proved negative, and ultrasound had not yet been discovered. This news infuriated my husband; he wanted me to have an abortion. I can recount coming home from work sick and worried only to find him on the phone trying to get information on where I could go or what I could do. I was deeply offended and concerned about my life. I knew within myself I was not pregnant, but I also knew something was terribly wrong. I went to surgery still unsure of my condition and thinking if I get out of this alive things will change! I felt not only a deep sense of courage in what lay

ahead but also the betrayal of a good friend. We were divorced in 1974.

Afterwards my life became somewhat narcissistic. Something happens when death stares you in the face while your best friend stabs you in the back. All one seems to have is one's self. Now, for the first time in my life, I was truly on my own and enjoying it. I was asked to do some runway modeling as I only weighed 100 pounds at the time and possessed an enormous amount of energy. During this interim period of my life, I became a gourmet cook and an avid bicyclist. I cycled many miles per day and felt I was slipping if for any reason I missed this exercise. I could not live life fast enough. As my life randomly evolved, my parents remained troubled at a distance. They desperately wanted me to settle down and lead what they believed to be a normal lifestyle. But, my body had been renewed; a gift of new life. I felt light and free; full of wild excitement and strength. But, unfortunately, I had learned nothing about myself in relation to the other and my projection onto reality.

Thus, in the mid-seventies I allowed someone whom I have come to know and will refer to as The Distancer to enter my life. He, of course, was not a pure breed distancer, but given a certain stress, his tendency was to move in the direction of a life lived with a certain flatness of rhythm. This flatness was made up of zero contributions socially in

life, zero expectation of life with the hope that someone out there would come along and fill him up. One of his main cruelties would be to promise so much and deliver so little of his own personhood. His very logic of control provoked my outbursts of passion--outbursts that he found so difficult to deal with. The avoidance of confrontation, or the arrogance that covered lead to his half-dead existence. Full of fears and obsessions, withdrawn into himself, the rhythm of the distancer tended to be flat, not much up and not much down, but always terribly reasonable.

The Distancer became the father of our only daughter. When I reflect as to why and how this happened, I become somewhat mystified. I describe myself as partially mystified, because I can understand only vaguely why I became involved with this person. In remembrance, he was pleasantly polite to me and always interested in listening to my plans. However, most of my plans were narrowly focused except for those which surrounded my work, and even here I was like someone fumbling in the dark. I was always seeking beyond the given to discover connections between a meaning for education in relation to a personal meaning of being. Most probably for this reason, I began working on my master's degree and so did my companion. We both attended Appalachian State University in the summer months while off work from public school teaching. In 1978 we graduated; I with high honors which

unknowingly affected our relation. Nonetheless, in 1979 we were married.

My family was delighted because I was no longer divorced and had married someone they felt was of the same social background, a hard working, church going people. It still remains painfully difficult and almost an impossibility for me to recall and to place on paper the intricate struggle of our failing relation and of our distance influenced by the dual problematic of being and seeming.

Metaphorically speaking our marriage could be described as a vicious Merry-Go-Round. At times I would become angry and begin to see him as he really was--his being arrogant, hostile, and manipulative. I would respond with heavy verbal confrontation. However, The Distancer was incredibly skilled at knowing just how close he must come in order to keep my energy level as pursuer in motion; to maintain my place within the cyclical status quo of our relation. He would not give spontaneous affection but a carefully prepared amount of humility as if measured exactly by a given recipe, just enough humility within his speech to keep me from doing anything different or constructive. Thus, our relation continued to spin but could not get anywhere different. This intricate cycle of denial and manipulation, of being and seeming kept him in a safe position; exactly where he cowardly wanted to remain.

> . . . When two men converse together, the psychological is certainly an important part of the situation, as each listens and each prepares to speak. Yet this is only the hidden accompaniment to the conversation itself, the phonetic event fraught with meaning, whose meaning is to be found neither in one of the two partners nor in both together, but only in their dialogue itself, in this 'between' which they live together.(Buber, p. 65, 1988)

The Distancer lived in massive denial with everyone but me; he would break down only momentarily when heavily confronted and could see no other way out of the situation at hand. To the world he exerted an immense effort to maintain his image of Mr. All-In-Control and through subtle implication defined me as either The Bad Guy or even at times as Dumb Frances.

Another aspect of his image seemed to be the role of "Poor Me"--a projection of inadequacy, helplessness, self-pity, sacrificing everything for just a crumb to be thrown his way every now and again. He seemed to enjoy being seen as a Good Ole Hard-Nose Country Boy who did not want much out of life; mainly just to be a Family Man. Image was of ultimate significance so he understood how to tell everyone just as much as he wanted them to know depending on how he wanted to be seen at the time.

Mr. All-In-Control seemed to be torn between two images: Country Boy and Mr. Executive. Part of him would have liked to relax and simply be Ole Country Boy because he liked that type of person, and this image symbolized his family heritage.

But, Mr. Executive wanted more control than Country Boy so he constantly drove himself to success refusing to let his root family see the social butterfly he so desired. Due to this constant conflict inside himself, he felt resentful and did not know exactly what to do. He never really seemed to know himself, and neither did anyone else. This identity problem prevented him from getting close to anyone because he feared what might be revealed; that he really did have feelings and problems. He seemed to be oblivious of the notion that it is O.K. to have feelings and not to be perfect. Gripped by the thought of an anxiety as a creature before a truth which he feared he could not face, he would turn to me. I would confront so heavily and so true that he could see no other way out. Here again is IMAGE; the problematic of two types of human existence: what one really "is" and what one wishes to "seem." In general, these two types of human existence are mixed, but for discussion purposes, one must be content to distinguish between human beings where one or the other attitude predominates. This distinction occurs mainly in our personal dealings with one another. It is within these two types of existence, one discovers either cowardice or courage. And, no matter what the find, either courage or cowardice thereon one experiences sacrifice.

This was a palpable experience for me. My life had been touched by the duality between "being persons" who are spontaneous without reserve and who desire to make themselves

understood from "seeming persons" whose main concern is with image or the "look" which will win the approval of the other. This tendency toward "seeming" expresses a human need for confirmation and the human desire to be confirmed falsely rather than not to be confirmed at all. However here, in the interhuman realm, I learned a deep mistrust of humankind, the courage to face another day, and the sacrifice of my marriage. To be united in partnership with one who lives from day to day projecting "recurrent impressions" instead of the "steadiness of one's being" is quite frightening and is a most superficial state. Buber holds:

> . . . It originates, in fact, on the other side of interhuman life itself, in men's dependence upon one another. It is no light thing to be confirmed in one's being by others, and seeming deceptively offers itself as a help in this. To yield to seeming is man's essential cowardice, to resist it is his essential courage. But this is not an inexorable state of affairs which is as it is and must so remain. One can struggle to come to oneself--that is, to come to confidence in being. One struggles, now more successfully, now less, but never in vain, even when one thinks he is defeated. One must at times pay dearly for life lived from the being; but it is never to dear.(Buber, p. 72, 1992)

To have my life confirmed by deceptive "seeming" was "no light matter"; indeed, it was an existentially weighted matter. The process of being came to me through great struggle and sacrifice. The struggle represented a life lived under abusive oppression and control. After the death of my father (1981) and my motherly grandmother (1983), with my

mother being hospitalized twice during this same agonizing time with pneumonia, the birth of our only child (1982), and my hysterectomy in (1984), I became aware of the cowardly deceitfulness of the "seeming" person with whom I lived. Nothing I did or did not do was enough--this included the courage to break the silence and pretension with one year's worth of continuous counseling. I assumed responsibility within the relation. However, my partner simply continued to move the confirmation marker with my struggle while his struggle "seemed" to be represented by an inward barrier of silence. Perhaps the tough layer of "seeming" which had settled down on him was too difficult for that particular time to penetrate. The "ghost of semblances" which Buber speaks of has yet to be exorcised. "Stale conceit" prevented dialogue and stifled relations. Consequently, the sacrifice meant our relation, home, family and a change in work. Since that time my life has been lived more closely to the bone with deeper meaning through a partnership of dialogue. Peace of mind has been worth the price. We separated in 1984 and divorced in 1987.

From here, the next chapter represents a celebration of imagination for cure--a curriculum for my own personal becoming:

> Who knows what beautiful and winged life, whose egg has been buried for ages under many concentric layers of woodenness . . . in the dead dry life of society, deposited at the first in the alburnum of the green and living tree.(Thoreau)

My imagination was once stirred by a film in which the mannequin came to life after store hours only to challenge the secrets and silences of our own common sense assumptions embodied within our own living reality. Eventually, out of the power of love she was "act-into-well-being" by her sculptor. In the next chapter, I will explore these common sense assumptions and the power of love within the sphere of the interhuman.

CHAPTER III

IMAGINATION, POLARITY AND TRANSFORMATION

--Spiritual Infusion in Daily Life--

"Weaving Websters" such as I, who have experienced the volcanic eruption of an Out-Rageous "E-motion" which has been smoldering for decades beneath the categories of "male-identified" memory, lust to share my realization of participation in Be-ing. This actualization requires a cathartic Re-action by Re-membering my Dis-memberment; a seeking of a certain imagining power for cure. A creative power which weaves new word-thoughts into old word-thoughts and allows them to enter into relations with the whole fabric of my consciousness, my personal being.

For when I Re-member, I engage in an activity that is exclusively my own. No matter how much of my remembrance I share, it still remains my memory. And, included in my Re-membering, there is a perspective which must be called personal which reflects my unique position as Re-memberer. So what do my memories have to say to me about my personal identity? From this world I am formed. As I am in this world, I wish to reclaim responsibility for my own actions out of a context of personal authority; to experience or to dispose of memories as I see fit. In this way, I can

consolidate the self I have been and shape the self I am coming to be. And from this primal ground claim freedom in this imaginative act of Re-membering.

Re-membering enables me "to share Happiness, to make metamorphic leaps, and to encounter Metamemory." (Daly, 1989, p. 204) These formulated word-maps provide vehicles for passage to "Metamemory" a unique place of discovery where contexts of meaning create atmospheres of commonality, connections which compose all past and all future, and, in turn, construct necessary landscapes for all looking-backward, all self knowing and all self-confession. It is from this territory that my story has come to domiciliate and to participate in the CULT of MYSTERY, of MULTIPLICITY, of LABYRINTH; my story along with other women's stories. And, from these stories emanates a bond; a relation gathered together by similar threads of common "Metamemory." From this place, memory serves and preserves a constant presence; the image of my personal past, of a larger historical past as well, and represents my personal becoming.

It is from this primal ground which will not forsake me, but remains ever-present to anchor and to educate me toward my goal: my lust to share in the fruitful process/participation of Be-ing, of Happiness. This ground, of course, is more than a mere standpoint but a concrete reality which has produced me and has led me toward Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations. This relatedness pertains to our human situation which is

rooted in relations between Meaning and Be-ing. In this dilemma of our human condition, I must in good faith remain open to transcendence, an ultimate wholeness, a web of ever-renewing, self-transcending human living "to be at the crossroads" (Heschel, 1965, p. 68) or else sink into the quicksand of despair, of nothingness.

Heschel holds that "living is a situation, the content of which is much richer than the concept of being." I interpret this to mean that living describes the process of everyday events, the situations which compose being, a mode of existence. Living details the actions of being. And most essentially from this interpretation, what does it mean to be a "living being,". . . who "seeks to relate man to divine living, to a transcendence called the living God."(Heschel, 1965, p. 69) I concern myself with Be-ing in so far as I have a more or less distinct consciousness of the underlying wholeness which ties me to other beings of whose reality I already have a preliminary notion.

Knowledge woven through acts of Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations is characterized by the "woman-identified" recognition of connectedness that inspires and sustains us through a common memory; a setting which creates atmospheres of something else to be. However, concomitantly in our legendary daily life, weaving "Websters do not flinch from seeing the complicity of women as token torturers." (Daly, 1989, p. 201) It is out of this context of rage and dis-

memberment that I rejoin and struggle to know "who in fact holds the institutional power that man-ipulates and damages the consciousness/conscience of women who oppress other women."

Instances of such complicity are experienced daily between our work and our personal relations one to another. This oppression manifests itself not only in metaphors of "beauty as economy" but also "when phallocratic racial oppression further desensitizes and dissociates the woman who has 'power' from her more oppressed sister."(Daly, 1989, p. 202)

As outlined by Mary Daly, a testimony is given by Sarah M. Grimke, abolitionist from South Carolina, which "concerns the torture of a young woman 'whose independent spirit could not brook the degradation of slavery' and who repeatedly ran away."(Daly, 1989, p. 202) It was reported that the young woman's back was so lacerated that "'a finger could not be laid between the cuts.'"(Daly, 1989, p. 202) In addition:

> A heavy iron collar, with three prongs projecting from it, was placed round her neck, and a strong and sound front tooth was extracted, to serve as a mark to describe her, in case of escape.(Lerner, 1972, p. 18)

Sarah Grimke, who personally saw this young woman, stated:

> Her sufferings at this time were agonizing; she could lie in no position but on her back, which was sore from scourgings, as I can testify from personal inspection, and her only place of rest was on the floor, on a blanket. These outrages were

> committed in a family where the mistress daily read the scriptures, and assembled her children for family worship. She was accounted, and was really, so far as alms-giving was concerned, a charitable woman, and tender-hearted to the poor; and yet this suffering slave, who was the seamstress of the family, was continually in her . . . with her lacerated and bleeding back, her mutilated mouth, and heavy iron collar without, so far as appeared, exciting any feelings of compassion.(Lerner, 1972, pp. 18-19)

Daly names this "passive complicity of the pious bible-reading mistress" as illustrative of "one way in which hatred could work itself out."(Daly, 1982, p. 202) Dale Spender further elaborates Daly's explanation of "women as token torturers" through Rebecca Schreiner, Olive Schreiner missionary mother, who adhered to the religious precepts of "being a good Christian," thus ensuring that her daughters conform to the same code of cultural restraints--viewing submission to the elders as a virtue and their fear of God--regardless of its destructive nature.(Spender, 1982, p. 651)

> Olive's relationship with her mother and sister was described as so cruel and harsh that she was never able to identify fully with women (despite many women friends). For she knew, "'women, like her mother and her elder sister Ettie, could also persecute other women unjustly, disciplining members of their own sex to conform to a code of female behavior that in the wider culture operated ultimately to the benefit of men. Thus, Olive Schreiner would 'hate' as well as 'love' her own sex and recognize "the colonized self inside her.'" (Spender, 1982, p. 651)

And, in terms prescribed by Daly (1978), that "'deforming' one's daughters in accordance with the standards of a

patriarchal model, and in the interest of gaining patriarchal approval, is a form of behavior not unexpected in a patriarchal society which is structured so that it is necessary for women to gain male approval."(Spender, 1982, p. 651) Spender depicts Rebecca Schreiner as:

> . . . hardly a free agent making a choice from a range of viable or positive options, but a woman who believed--as she was meant to--that there were no choices. When it came to the relationship of women and men, Olive Schreiner seems to have shared this frame of reference--there were no options, the two sexes must be able to live together in harmony . . .that they must accept and condone the behavior of men in the interest of the mutual good. . . She could stand as an example of a woman caught between the pressures of subordination and the pressures of trying to conceptualize an alternative social and economic arrangements.(Spender, 1982, pp. 651-654)

Accordingly, Daly suggests that "It would be not only absurd but ethically wrong to excuse the slave-holders' wives, or to excuse contemporary female racist oppressors, or to condone a Phyllis Schlafly for her gynocidal, genocidal, biocidal politics."(Daly, 1982, p. 203) Daly comments:

> As conscious carriers of phallocratic diseases and executors of phallocratic crimes, such women are indeed responsible. Furies, moreover, will recognize that the obvious corruption and **co-optation** of women under patriarchy can function to weaken Female-identified Outrage in women who are sincerely struggling to live a metapatriarchal morality. That is, token torturers function as instruments of the sadostate not only as the appointed executors of oppressive acts, but also as dis-couraging and confusing role models, driving other women into paralyzing guilt and misdirected anger. Patriarchal women, then, function as Rage-blockers/twisters.(Daly, 1989, p. 203)

It is from this patriarchal morality that our need to become outrageously conscious of our "colonized selves," our inner selves and our phallocratic diseases of contempt for ourselves and others becomes revealed. The necessity of our imperative state of emergency should be proclaimed among our furiously, outrageously passionate selves. The significance of this, our own self-confirming definitions of reality, realized within our inner communion with ourselves, "our cheating that first person within ourselves out of their natural inheritance"(Fox, 1940, p. 18) may be found in this our complex and perplexing dilemma which outlines our action-filled state of alarm. Our deprivation thus becomes both our opportunity and our vocation: to become conscious of the things we have not seen and to make others conscious of these same things. This action becomes necessary in response to our sense of justice in relation to our sense of compassion, and in turn, to our passion for survival:

> It is predictable and already observable that as the biocidal nuclear arms race continues, as the destruction of Third World people by the United States and other powerful nations escalates, as racism and poverty 'at home' worsens, many women's energy and motivation for Weaving tapestries of Female Be-Friending is undermined. This is partly traceable to disgust and horror at the increasing visibility and apparent moral bankruptcy of right-wing women and other female servants of the sadostate. It is also traceable to false guilt for putting the cause of feminism first.(Daly, 1989, pp. 203-204)

Daly recognizes the root of this problem to be a "time-honored trick of the patriarchs" in the creation of a "perpetual State of Emergency" to make it appear or seem that "male-ordered activity takes precedent over attempts of women's liberation." A particular undermining which Daly elaborates as the source of "rapism, racism, gynocide, genocide, and ultimate biocide."(Daly, 1989, p. 204)

It is here that an analysis of not only our thinking but also our living becomes extremely important and may be viewed from a different dimension. This position is one in which "we are so familiar that its peculiarity . . . almost escaped us." Yet, necessary insight into this peculiarity involves a magnetic polar tension between the social and the interhuman, the elements of the interhuman.(Buber, 1992, pp. 67-68)

The "interhuman realm" as Buber elucidates means humankind's personal dealing with one another; a forming of a partnership no matter how brief. However, this relations is frequently blurred by viewing our human condition from a different realm--the social. This social realm is an essentially different area of human life. According to Buber, whenever the social realm "reigns alone or is predominant, men feel themselves to be carried by the collectivity, which lifts them out of loneliness and fear of the world and lostness." (Buber, 1992, p. 68)

I can readily observe today's society with its insatiable desire to belong to certain social affiliations in order to

Seem A-PART of an accepted collective--our sense of a collective affiliation. However, problematic to our collective need is the critical and guiding force of the media which produces a constant desire for bombardment. Ads send hidden persuasive agendas reinforcing and inviting women to become; to transform themselves into products and consumers. This transformation colors our thinking and in turn our living values as who will be cared about and who will be discarded through our seeming appearances. These images make persons "fit" or "unfit" to go out into the world and feel A-PART of time and the accepted milieu.

Thus, our values as a culture become made and determined by definitions of self which precede our existence and form barriers to authentic being-in-living relations. Hegemonic forces become the source of our knowing, our seeking and our finding the sort of entertainment which permits us to relax and to distance ourselves from direct confrontation with the Other. Chris Weedon's poststructualist theory clearly identifies these common sense, natural and seemingly unchangeable definitions of women's nature and appropriate role inherent in our culture. Within this material space of our "I-It" reality, feminist theories can make sense of women's awareness of the correspondences and contradictions in our everyday lives from which the perspective of an isolated individual, may seen inexplicable. (Weedon, 1987, p. 5)

Poststructualism also points to social definitions of self which pre-exist our lives.

> Language is not the expression of unique individuality; it constructs the individual's subjectivity in ways which are socially specific. Moreover for poststructuralism, subjectivity is neither unified, nor fixed . . . poststructualism theorizes subjectivity as a site of disunity and conflict, central to the process of change and to preserving the status quo.(Weedon, 1987, p. 21)

Weedon's discussion on women's identity in relation to their complicity with oppression and the plurality of meaning implies that language does not originate from the individual intentional subjects; the individual's relation to language is largely unconscious. Her rebuttal to this problem is to question the location of social meaning in fixed signs. For instance, "the meaning of the signifier 'woman' varies from the ideal to victim to object of sexual desire, according to its context." (Weedon, 1987, p. 25) She pays full attention to social and institutional context of textuality in order to address the power relations of everyday life.

> Social meanings are produced within social institutions and practices in which individuals, who are shaped by these institutions, are agents of change, rather than its authors, change which may either serve hegemonic interests or challenge existing power relations.(Weedon, 1987, p. 25)

I agree with Weedon on these circular issues of the material reality of the "I-It" world, but I can experience no transcendence within this endless mechanical cycle of dualism.

It leads to the existential abyss of nothingness--to atheistic despair. Indeed, people begin to feel powerless and devalued as persons; particularly working-class students whom I encounter each day. Without a doubt women not only need to be aware, awake and fully conscious of the social issues that impact their lives daily, but also they need to feel uplifted and energized from this consumptive entrapment of the material world. What about the uniqueness found in the sight of each human face? What kind of perspective--new world view--or alternative consciousness can be found while viewing only a singular piece of the world?

Even though I am caught daily in the human dilemma of contradictions, my contemplative self, my re-membering self maintains faith in an interconnected web of relations. This matrix embodies a multiplicity of patterns which form a deep and underlying wholeness among them which share in the reality of God--in the infinite I Am.

Life cannot be reduced to a mere explanation of social phenomena; that is the assigned facts of individuation exemplified by Satre's facticity. Brueggemann speaks of life:

> It will not be explained but only sung about, for the song penetrates royal reason. . . for to explain is to force into old royal categories. . . the energizing hope comes precisely to those ill-schooled in explanations and understandings. It comes to those who will settle for amazements they can neither explain nor understand. (Brueggemann, 1978, p. 99)

It is my opinion that subjectivity is always in flux. But it is within this flux of subjectivity that wholeness is formed. "For, in the process of becoming, 'every unity is always at the same time a plurality, and every plurality is always a unity.'"(Mendes-Flor, 1989, p. 55) "'Everything is in transformation. Accordingly, we must learn to understand the world as an entity of flux (Verwandlungswesen).'"(Mendes-Flor, 1989, p. 55)

> In the light of the eternal flux of the world, multiplicity and unity cannot be considered as antinomies but rather as dialectical coefficients. Implied here is a unity of substance, multiplicity being merely manifest attributes. An alternative way of expressing this fact is noting that the thing-in-itself (the ideal, unity) and multiplicity of the phenomenal world are essentially the same:
>
> With this realization of the dialectical unity of substance, we have also bridged the abyss between our 'I' and the world, for if substance is single and all-comprehensive, we obviously are one with the world: 'for the One is always also the other, continually transforming into . . . that which is about me, into part of my I. The entire world is then nothing but my I, and my I is nothing but the world which is external to me.'(Mendes-Flohr, 1987, p. 56)

Therefore, Weedon connects with Jacoby's Social Amnesia and also with me concerning memory. Weedon claims:

> No individual ever approaches a discourse unaffected by the memory of previous discursive interpellations . . . As individuals we are not mere objects of language but the sites of discursive struggle, a struggle which takes place in the consciousness of the individual.(Weedon, 1987, p. 98-106)

Moreover, the acquisition of modes of subjectivity involves the accumulation of the memory, conscious or unconscious, of subject positions and the psychic and emotional structures implicit in them. Paradoxically, how many times within my own memory has a sense of loneliness, fear and sense of disconnectedness been felt within the social or collective group? As a personal observation, I must answer that the times have been many. For me, it does seem the social collective "holds in check the inclination toward personal life." At this point, the existence of life for one person to the other becomes secondary to the collective group. It is as though the relations/work of the collective become more significant to those of the dialogical partner/s. In the collective, persons become only a part of the total sum--fragmented--less than whole or "an object of observation." Accordingly, the values of the collective come into question. This gap creates a sense of separateness which heightens my uneasiness. How do the values of the collective mesh with my own? I become anxious and my courage dwindles, my courage to enter into relations. The effect accentuates my desire to become more distant--or distant in relations, to remain silent and to take refuge in the pseudo-security of the world of "IT--the world of ordered objectivity and private subjectivity." Thus, I become "sunk" in my oneness. The demon loneliness takes heed of opportunity and descends upon my soul with an inevitable fear and dread. Who am I now? Who have I been?

Who shall I become? My incompleteness overwhelms my Be-ing. I confront myself only to rediscover my existential abyss. This experience "sends me into the wilderness to seek my cure" or into solitude to see out the Absolute Other. Here, I can be made whole once again. Only now can I regain courage to enter into genuine dialogue with the Other. Buber calls this unfolding the dialogical. He holds:

> In accordance with this, it is basically erroneous to try to understand the interhuman phenomena as psychological. When two men converse together, the psychological is certainly an important part of the situation, as each listens and each prepares to speak. Yet this is only the hidden accompaniment to the conversation itself, the phonetic event fraught with meaning, whose meaning is to be found neither in one of the two partners nor in both together, but only in their dialogue itself, in the 'between' which they live together.(Buber, 1992, p. 70)

The sphere of the interhuman, therefore, presents the essential problem of two different types of human existence whereby:

> . . . The one proceeds from what one really is, the other from what one wishes to seem. In general, the two are found mixed together. . . We must be content to the distinguish between men in whose essential attitude the one or the other predominates.(Buber, 1992, p. 70)

It is this Pre-Dominate "male-identified memory" which creates the lack of harmony within women's lives. Their lives become confirmed in their own objectification of self as a nonperson. This dangerous memory threatens human existence;

our relation to existence itself and attacking interhuman existence as such:

> But where the semblance originates from the lie and is permeated by it, the interhuman is threatened in its very existence. It is not that someone utters a lie, falsifies some account. The lie I mean does not take place in relation to particular facts, but in relation to existence itself, and it attacks interhuman existence as such.(Buber, 1992, p. 71)

Buber gives an example of "Being and Seeming" where two persons look at one another:

> The one who lives from his being looks at the other just as one looks at someone with whom he has personal dealings. His look is 'spontaneous,' 'without reserve'; of course he is not uninfluenced by the desire to make himself understood by the other, but he is uninfluenced by any thought of the idea of himself which he can or should awaken in the person whom he is looking at. His opposite is different. Since he is concerned with image which his appearance and especially his look or glance, produces in the other, he 'makes' this look.(Buber, 1992, pp. 70-71)

For the survival of our earth and all humanity, the danger here resides where "the semblance originates from the lie and is permeated by it, the interhuman is threatened in its very existence. Life's confirmation now becomes the lie of existence. Therefore, Buber concludes:

> . . . we begin to recognize the crisis of man as the crisis of what is between man and man, we must free the concept of uprightness from the thin moralistic tones which cling to it, and let it take its tone from the concept of bodily uprightness . . .the fulfillment of human life can only come through the soul's walking upright, through the great uprightness which is not tempted by any

> seeming because it has conquered all semblance.(Buber, 1992, p. 72)

Of significance in this issue between "Being and Seeming" found within the Interhuman Sphere concerns lives being lived subservient to the images which they produce in others. There is a widespread tendency in all human beings to live from the recurrent impressions one makes instead of from the steadiness of one's on be-ing. As Buber indicates this tendency "originates, in fact, on the other side of interhuman life itself, in men's dependence upon one another." He continues:

> It is no light thing to be confirmed in one's being by others, and seeming deceptively offers itself as a help in this. To yield to seeming is man's essential cowardice, to resist it is his essential courage. . .One can struggle to come to oneself--that is, to come to confidence in being . . .One must at times pay dearly for life lived from the being; but it is never too dear.(Buber, 1992, p. 72)

Buber recognizes this as "the privilege of humankind by the hidden activity of my being" (my Mystery); I can establish an impassable barrier to objectification but only in partnership can my being be perceived as an existing whole. This wholeness is to be derived once again from the confrontation of the other. Therefore, it is during this meeting that dialogue unfolds. This relation may be wholly mutual or tending to grow in mutual relations; lives lived from Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations.

Mary Daly speaks to the tendency of life being lived from the LIE which originates in Seeming; thus confirming women's role as dependent nonperson:

> Only clearly focused Female Outrage can sustain the work of metapatterning. Only continuous Weaving of tapestries of female-identified knowledge--that is, our work of Be-Friending--can further the development of metapatriarchal consciousness and behavior. These Crone-centered tapestries can serve as magic carpets for women who choose to fly beyond the sadostate's Eternal Lie.(Daly, 1989, p. 204)

Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations is radically linked to Daly's "Be-Friending, Be-longing and Rage." It is within these contexts that metapatriarchal women wish for each other and en-courage in each other, for only in this Longing/Lusting for Be-ing can bring about Happiness. Happiness obtains its meaning as an aim which maintains and fans a discontent with my aspirations and achievements:

> . . .the maintenance and fanning of a craving that knows no satisfaction. Man's true fulfillment depends upon communion with that which transcends us.(Heschel, 1965, p. 87)

Thus, Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations desires to arouse and to awaken in a woman her Be-longing, her "telic focus," her end purpose, her authentic existence. Synonymously found in Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations and Be-Friending is the flowering of Be-longing, an important condition for arousal and sustaining of this ontological Passion. It provides the context in which a low-grade

schizophrenia, which is the contrary of Rage, can be confronted and overcome. The manner in which the context of Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations functions to overcome this affliction of dis-memberment is analogous to the action of a magnet. That is, it attracts the "telic focusing" powers of Be-ing in a woman. For, everything that IS is connected with everything else that IS. **Only confirmation of one's own Reality awakens that Reality in another**. The significance of this confirmation cannot be overemphasized. Without some notion of connectedness of common consciousness among women, how can this confirmation ever take place? Without self-confirmation women remain forever separated and set over against one another. This may indeed appear at first glance to be an individual stance; however, it is only from the spiraling movement of Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations that woman can become a friend to the Be-ing in her Self, which is to say, her Centering Self.

> The intensity of her desire focuses her energy, which becomes unsplintered, unblocked. This focusing, gathering of her dis-sociated energy, makes possible the release of Rage. It is her spiraling staircase, leading her where she can find her own Kind, unbind her mind.(Daly, 1989, p. 201)

"This Rage is not 'a stage.' It is not something to be gotten over. It is a transformative, focusing Force." Daly beautifully describes this Force:

> Like a horse who streaks across fields on a moonlite night, her mane flying, Rage gallops on

> pounding hooves of unleashed Passion. The sounds of its pounding awaken transcendent E-motion. As the ocean roars its rhythms into every creature, giving birth to sensations of our common Sources/Courses, Rage too, makes senses come alive again, thrive again.(Daly, 1989, p. 201)

As a child, I stood transfixed in front of a round-shaped portrait of the heads of three white horses; their remainder left for my imagination was clearly not the focus of the artist or mine. But, the Source of my intrigue and discernment was the Fury/Rage found in the countenance of their unique faces:

> Blowing tightly, wild mane on outstretched heads
> Glaring eyes with projected dread
> Sensing fury of an unbroken rage
>
> Flaring nostrils, Gasping mouths
> Searching for air-like Spirit
>
> Galloping in solidarity full Force across an unknown, dark and ominous plain,
>
> Alerted ears Waiting
>
> Frances Crocker-Rhoney

An immanent danger apparently led. But, what was their sense of alarm? I intuited a common harmony as if I, too, somehow accompanied their story chord. But, I could not Re-member the song's Source. I remained absorbed and en-tranced by the mystery and marvel of the moment. What I had faced was not emptiness but an ineffable abundance of Be-ing which had endowed me with marvelous reward.

As I reflect and can now give account of my wonder moment before sheer Be-ing, I had faced the marvel of the moment. "The world is not just here. It shocks us into Amazement." (Heschel, 1965, p. 87) Heschel holds:

> Awe is more than an emotion; it is a way of understanding, insight into a meaning greater than ourselves. The beginning of awe is wonder, and the beginning of wisdom is awe.
>
> Awe is an intuition for the dignity of all things, a realization that things not only are what they are but also stand, however remotely, for something supreme.
>
> Awe is a sense for the transcendence, for the reference everywhere to mystery beyond all things. It enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple; to feel in the rush of the passing the stillness of the eternal. What we cannot comprehend by analysis, we become aware of in awe.(Heschel, 1965, p. 89)

Just now I can Re-member the Fury and why women's lives require the context of Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations, a "Be-Friending" directed toward sustaining the positive force of moral Out-Rage and continuing the Fury-fueled task of inventing new ways of living. Without this way of knowing, of re-membering, of moral outrage, anger can only deteriorate into bitterness, and lives become sunk in the quicksand of nothingness. For "it is only the twofold itself which unfolds the clarity, that is, the clearing in which present beings as such, and presence, can be discerned by man. . ." (Heidegger, 1971, p. 33) Indeed, humankind can only come to know Be-ing

through relations, a larger context. This context embodies our twofold attitude: "As experience, the world belongs to the primary word 'I-It.' The primary word 'I-Thou' establishes the world of relations."(Buber, 1986, p. 6)

> The I of the primary word I-It makes its appearance as individuality and becomes conscious of itself as subject (of experiencing and using). The I of the primary world I-Thou makes its appearance as person and becomes conscious of itself as subjectivity (without a dependent genitive).(Buber, 1986, p. 62)

Individuality defines itself as being different from other individualities. A person defines the self by entering into relations with other persons. "The person concerns itself as Self, individuality concerns itself with My--my kind, my race, my creation, my genius, etc." Buber holds: "genuine subjectivity can only be dynamically understood, as the swinging of the I in its lonely truth":(Buber, 1986, p. 63)

> No man is pure person and no man pure individuality. None is wholly real, and none wholly unreal. Every man lives in the twofold I. But there are men so defined by person that they may be called persons, and men so defined by individuality that they may be called individuals. True history is decided in the field between these two poles.(Buber, 1986, p. 65)

The symbol of infinity satisfies my need to give visual substance to this Fury/Fueled energy Source--representing the boundless extent of the Infinite Being--the Infinite I Am. Located on one pole is Be-ing and on the opposite pole is

Living. Wholeness is formed by a fruitful sharing between the two. Language intersects this symbol and allows dialogue to progress.

> Only the man who realizes in his whole life with his whole being the relations possible to him helps us to know man truly. And . . . the depths of the question about man's being are revealed only to the man who has become solitary, the way to the answer lies through the man who overcomes his solitude without the forfeiting its questioning power.
>
> For it means that the man who wants to grasp what he himself is salvages the tension of solitude and its burning problematic for a life with his world, a life that is renewed in spite of all, and out of this new situation proceeds with his thinking.(Buber, 1992, p. 36)

From a Buberian notion of transcendence arises the criticism of the individualist method from the standpoint of the collectivist tendency:

> But if individualism understands only a part of man, collectivism understands man only as a part: neither advances to the wholeness of man, to man as a whole.(Buber, 1992, p. 36)

This polar stance or world-view is not one or the other but both in one. It becomes the 1 manifested in 2 not a composite force of 1 + 1 = 2 . . . as viewed by a Coleridgian theory of imagination. This is a kind of knowledge that is not simply a tension between two essentially antagonistic forces but a fruitful sharing between forces of one power in the same act and instant. Coleridge's theory of imagination,

grounded in Coleridgean polarity, is deeply bound up with his vital philosophy:

> The merely 'mechanical' mind can see only opposition or, at best, the juxtapositions of separate realities. The mind, however, that is imbued with a 'living and spiritual philosophy' can envision two distinct realities-- 'two counter-powers--actually 'interpenetrating' each other so, that each shares in the being of the other.(Gallant, 1989, p. 7)

In John Livingston Lowes's study of Coleridge's creative unconsciousness, "The Imagination Creatrix," Lowe provides a dramatic example from the workings of his own imagination:

> Put an idea into your intelligence and leave it there an hour, a day, a year, without ever having occasion to refer to it. When, at last, you return to it, you do not find it as it was when acquired. It has domiciliated itself, so to speak, become at home, entered into relations with your other thoughts, and integrated itself with the whole fabric of the mind.(Rugg, 1963, p. 201)

This critical reflection of the self is not a matter of reductionism as Jacoby has critiqued whereby the human community shrinks to the immediacy of the I-THOU (you) and becomes abstracted from the historical and social reality. Conversely, this is an affirmation of that faith as is evidenced within the reality of our stories and the social power which continues to dis-member and at the same moment nourish one half of the human population. As Beverly Harrison holds:

> We dare not minimize the very real historical power of women to be architects of what is most authentically human. We must not lose hold of the fact that we have been the chief builders of whatever human dignity and community has come to expression. We have the right to speak of building human dignity and community.(Harrison, 1989, p. 217)

In this context, Harrison critiques Daly's view of Be-ing as not going far enough. She states that "process theologians" rightly protest that Daly has not paid enough attention to, or given enough credit to modern philosophy of religion for incorporating these new views of nature. Daly needs to further incorporate the full meaning of the human struggle for life into our understanding of God. It is necessary to open up the naturalistic metaphors for God to the power of human activity, to freedom not only as radical creativity but also as radical moral power. In her opinion, "the metaphor of Be-ing does not permit us to incorporate the radicality of human agency adequately. Do-ing must be as fundamental as be-ing."(Harrison, 1989, p. 216)

Harrison points toward the power of love and our ability to build and deepen personhood itself in our human action. And to build up "the person" is also to deepen relations, that is, to bring forth community. Our deep power of human action in the work of or the denial of love needs to be recognized. Because we do not understand love as the power to "act-each-other-into-well-being nor do we realize our power to thwart life and to maim each other."(Harrison, 1989, p. 217) A

person of passion, a lover of humanity, is someone who enters seriously and intentionally into the depths of human existence, insists upon its value, and finds God in "the exchange of glances heavy with existence"(Elie Wiesel); or in refusing to live any longer with "someone's feet upon our necks"(Sarah Grimke); or in the vision of a promised land in which we are "free at last"(Martin Luther King, Jr.), a land in which love as justice is humanity's common experience.

Our passion as lovers of justice is what fuels both our rage at injustice--including that which is done to us--and our compassion, or our passion, which is on behalf of/in empathy with those who violate us and hurt us and would even destroy us. Rage and compassion, far from being mutually exclusive, belong together. Each is an aspect of our honesty, our integrity--for just as our rage is entirely appropriate to our experience of lovelessness in our own lives and elsewhere in the world, so too is our compassion the ongoing confession of our own refusal to make justice in the world.

I live not out of acquiescence to authority but out of vision, out of a utopian "no place," out of an experience of deep anticipation--of the not yet, born out of a shared commitment to make justice. Consequently, to live out of such a vision when the face of history appears to support the victory of evil forces is to experience the power of God as genuine transcendence. Thus, celebration and annunciation become a phase of re-cognizing, re-engagement, re-membering

and re-sisting of that which feeds my soul; to carry on the ever spiraling circle of my daily life and grounding my praxis as a teacher within a gendered curriculum. It is from this ground that I can discover, in all humility inherent in my vocation, the concrete reality of the divine and human transcendence present in radically human engagement in the quest to make justice.

Justice Making and Educational World-View

The genuine experience of human transcendence arises in the ecstatic power emergent between those who have connected with each other; this is emancipatory praxis. A passion for justice, shared and embodied, is the form God takes among us during our time. It is as David Purpel points out: "we are in yet another era of 'the worst of times, the best of times,' in a moment of both tremendous danger and extraordinary opportunity." (Purpel, 1989, p. 22)

As educators, we can not afford the luxury of turning our backs on the harsh realities of unnecessary human suffering through apathy, avoidance or immobilization. I, too, believe that we are living in times of an ever-increasing moral crisis and that our human response should be out of acts of emergency or moments of epoche to our present human condition. Indeed, our response as educators to this situation "ought to become our overriding and dominant concern and in so doing displace our obsessive concern with national pride, institutional glorification, and personal success."(Purpel, 1989, p. 6)

Certainly our discourse, in all our humility, in recognition of its complexity and perplexity should be redirected toward such noble goals and away from the trivialization of our energies. Our "authentic commitments" and "ever-present suspicions" should go beyond our preoccupation with achievement, hierarchy, privilege and domination. All of these obsessions are rife within areas of our work to which we call curriculum.

It is to this question of what persons should know in our educational curriculum or more specifically the gendered curriculum of commercial education in relation to social justice that I would like to focus. Both historically and in the ever present, our business community has defined and justified under the rubric of common sense what students in commercial education should know. These common sense assumptions have gone relatively unchallenged because they have been masked by the social construction of different forms of knowledge as we continue to follow and adhere to answers for which critical questions have been forgotten.(Giroux, 1989, p. 37)

Consequently, the commercial education curriculum provides for us one of the clearest examples of how education has co-opted itself to the needs of the labor market. The labor market being defined as what businessmen needed--the essential demand side of male privilege, whereas the labor or supply side being represented by the inessential female. In

this model men become served masters while women become harem slaves. This definitive model is grounded on the erroneous and ridiculous premise that men have been working in the best interest of women and the welfare of society at large. The proposition that women's interest are best served when men's interests are served, and that happiness for women lies in happy men is totally untenable.

However, as an oppressed group, some women must seek the favor of men in order to survive; they have few options. The informal curriculum of the office culture becomes socially constructed, a state to be worked for and attained--"service with a smile" and teachers of secretarial studies are in a rather different situation from most school teachers in this way. They become "token torturers" or covert executioners of the hidden curriculum of femininity, a curriculum where images of beauty are products of men's minds projected onto women's bodies and which demand that women distort themselves in order to become desirable.

The whole language of the secretarial curriculum reinforces the existing sex-segregated divisions between male managers and female secretaries. It manages this in the ways in which women become coerced into disfiguring themselves, of participating in their own torture--starving themselves and even submitting their bodies to the knife in an effort to become attractive to men. Currently, this can be acknowledged in our culture's largest product liability

lawsuit. Thus, women give their power away by allowing themselves to become "man-ipulated" and molded to meet the demand of privilege. I find myself outraged by this insidious injustice embodied within our own living, our own violence, our own beliefs. These values and beliefs found within connections between school curriculum and the larger society are the mechanisms of social control which become encouraged and nourished within our own educational discourse.

From these sources of power our artificial foundation of curriculum is formed and the politics of the dominant society becomes legitimated and linked to the political character of our classroom. This dominant world view "the culture of positivism" with its limited focus on objectivity, efficiency and techniques, shapes our educational perspective and forms its discourse primarily around a fixed relations of domination and subordination. Hence, the underlying question in relation to the moral and spiritual crisis in education is outlined by Martin Buber:

> The educational concept that is really genuine and adequate for its time must be founded on the insight that in order to arrive somewhere it is not enough to go towards something but it must also proceed from something. Upon what does our educational world-view stand? (Buber, 1957, p. 99)

This question implicates values; whose values? What counts as valued knowledge in the office curriculum and how is this knowledge both produced and legitimated? As a former student of the office curriculum for which I now serve, as

teacher and chair, to explore and to investigate the myths surrounding the secretary and the issues which support these stories is for me a personal moral responsibility. For over the past quarter century, I have been executing its doctrine of both correspondences and contradictions in a mediated dialectical tension between the school and the larger society without benefit of an historical consciousness. This ahistorical consciousness points toward the rise of science and technology and the subsequent growth of the culture of positivism. Along with Antionio Gramsci, I too am affected and deeply moved by cultural hegemony; the changing modes of domination and the ways in which these ideas become universally legitimated. Accordingly, Gramsci found ideological hegemony to be:

> . . . a form of control which not only manipulated consciousness but also saturated and constituted the daily experiences that shaped one's behavior. Hence, ideological hegemony referred to those systems of practices, meanings, and values which provided legitimacy to the dominant society's institutional arrangements and interests.(Giroux, 1981, p. 40)

Gramsci's analysis is important to our understanding of how cultural hegemony is used by ruling elites to reproduce their economic and political power. It helps us focus on the myths and social processes that characterize a specific form of ideological hegemony and how it becomes distributed through a multiplicity of different agencies of cultural transmission. Barry Adams holds:

> The transmission of systems of meaning across generations occurs through a multiplicity of agents. At the most basic level, cultural transmission is the practice of language. It is people speaking to one another, parents to children, individuals to peers.
>
> The accumulation of knowledge is an accretion of tried methods for living, an enrichment of perception, a developing power over given reality. Increasingly complex societies develop special carriers of tradition; the received wisdoms of the common stock of knowledge become less common in distribution and accessibility.
>
> Educational institutions, the electronic media, churches, and social environments increasingly differentiated by class, locale, gender, occupation, etc., come to distribute ideas unequally.(Adam, 1978, p. 30)

From these investigations there exists a dialogical relationship between power and ideology operating within the parameters of our historically changing events. Thus, the concept of cultural hegemony provides a theoretical foundation for examining the dialectical relationship between our economic production and the social and cultural reproduction. This is commonly referred to as cultural capital.(Giroux, 1981, p. 40)

It is here that inferiorized people discover themselves as symbols manipulated in the transmission of dominant culture. Their 'objective' identity lives beyond their control; the image of self, institutionalized by cultural agents, exists alien to their own experience and self-expression; their history becomes forgotten. And, to ignore or suppress history is an assault on thinking itself.

In a 1983 study on Baltimore Working Women, Roberta Goldberg examined different forms of consciousness of women office workers. One of Goldberg's most significant findings was the consistent link women office workers make between their working life and their status as women, particularly within the family. That these two factors are so closely tied indicates a type of consciousness that up to this point has gone unrecognized either theoretically or pragmatically. It is here that workers need to recognize the impact of patriarchy as a structural condition within modern capitalism, for it is the objective conditions of these workers, who both as women and as clerical workers, share a subjective reality. While this has worked to the disadvantage of women and to the advantage of male employers, both as individuals and as entire companies, it has also placed women office workers in a unique position from which to develop higher stages of consciousness.

Goldberg found correlations between higher levels of workplace consciousness and women workers' participation in organizations with other women office workers, thus combating the feeling of alienation. Solidarity also emerged with the combined growth of consciousness and participation. Here women began to recognize shared experiences and the need for joining together to confront and solve problems. Action which appeared to be closely connected to choice while "forced choice" became extremely limited and pragmatic in nature;

charting and dividing action into categories of collective or individual approaches.(Goldberg, 1983, p. 133)

In Recognition of Dangerous Memory

There are words I cannot choose again:
humanism androgyny
Such words have no shame in them, no difference
before the raging stoic grandmothers:
their glint is too shallow, like a dye
that does not permeate
the fibers of actual life
as we live it, now:

this fraying blanket with its ancient stains
we pull across the sick child's shoulder
or wrap around the senseless legs
of the hero trained to kill . . .

My heart is moved by all I cannot save:
so much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those
who age after age, perversely,
with no extraordinary power,
reconstitute the world.

Adrienne Rich

Henry Giroux quotes from Marcuse on how our own remembering might become dangerous:

> It becomes dangerous when its truth content of highlights contradictions in a given society . . . 'Remembrance of the past might give rise to dangerous insights, and the established society seems to be apprehensive of the subversive content of memory.(Giroux, 1981, p. 39)

Judith Plaskow makes apparent another dimension of dangerous memory from a Jewish feminist perspective:

> There is perhaps no verse in the Torah more disturbing to the feminist than Moses' warning to his people in Exodus 19:15, 'Be ready for the third

> day; do not go near a woman.' For here, at the very moment that the Jewish people stand at Mount Sinai ready to enter into the covenant--not now the covenant with individual patriarchs but presumably with the people as a whole--Moses addresses the community only as men.(Plaskow, 1989, p. 39)

Women's invisibility at the moment of entry into the covenant not only represents a problem of history but also the recognition of what the Torah represents to them as a source of "living memory."(Plaskow, p. 39) She points to the significance of this passage as the "tension between it and the reality of the Jewish woman who hears or reads it."(Plaskow, p. 40) Within the telling of this critical history there exists disturbing gaps of contradiction within the weaving of the everyday lives of Jewish women which concretely affect their identities and self understanding. She comments on the painfulness of this passage because "it seems to deny what we have always taken for granted" (Plaskow, p. 40)--a felt presence. Plaskow elaborates the Jewish woman's alternatives:

> On the one hand, women can choose to accept our absence from Sinai, in which case we allow the male text to define us and our relationship to the tradition. On the other hand, we can stand on the ground of our experience, on the certainty of our membership in our own people. To do this, however, is to be forced to re-member and recreate its history. It is to move from anger at the tradition, through anger to empowerment. It is to begin the journey toward the creation of a feminist Judaism.(Plaskow, 1989, p. 40)

Martin Buber holds: "The spiritual life of the Jews is part and parcel of their memory." In Judaism, memory is not simply a given but a religious obligation. This covenant of life becomes located in the retelling of Jewish stories of the past which recreates what and who they truly are in the present. This has an important moral for Jewish feminists. They, too, cannot redefine Judaism in the present without redefining their past because their present grows out of their history, a living memory.(Plaskow, 1989, p. 41)

From Plaskow's voice connections can be made with other women whose lives have historically become intimately invisible through male definitions and understandings of self. Her recommendations include a "creative imagining" based on our own experience; a reshaping of Jewish memory through historiography challenging the traditional assumptions of androcentric views of Jewish history which open up understandings of Jewish past. For historiography challenges memory; it calls it partial and distorted. It reveals another world around and underneath the textual tradition--a world in which women are historical agents struggling within and against a patriarchal culture.

Other suggestions which inform Jewish feminists of their presence and participation in their communal sense of self are the open-ended process of writing midrash--a reflection of contemporary beliefs and experiences which play with clues but extends them beyond the boundaries of the fragmentary

evidence; however, its root conviction is utterly traditional. However, she insists that "if the Torah is our text, it can and must answer our questions and share our values; if we wrestle with it, it will yield meaning." These must be used, as Mary Daly suggests, as "springboards for creative interpretation and invention."(Welch, 1990, p. 138) Plaskow offers another alternative for recreating history by speaking and action in prayer and ritual found within the cycles of the week and year as being the most potent reminders of central Jewish experience and values. These are remembered not just verbally but through the body and thus doubly imprinted on Jewish consciousness. All of these multiple aspects provide a vital recovery, reshaping and transmission process of formative events.(Plaskow, 1989, p. 47)

Sharon Welch considers in "A Theology for the Bearers of Dangerous Memory" the notion of "the valorization of absolute power." This valorization, which is no anomaly in Christian theology and is espoused by Tillich, Barth, and H. Richard Niebuhr tries to describe a divine power that fulfills essential human possibilities and criticizes human pretensions to absolute power. However, Welch holds: "Their work fails, however, on both counts. Human coercive power is legitimated, and work for the transformation of human life is undercut."(Welch, 1990, p. 120) Human coercive power becomes legitimated by the "erotics of domination: the rulers are themselves ruled, thus legitimately controlling other."(Welch,

p. 119) She recognizes this coercion as limited, the aim of universal integration and universal rule mystifies relations of domination:

> . . . the community must create centeredness, . . . by a ruling group which itself is represented by an individual (king, president, and so on) . . . The ambiguities of justice which follows from this character of communal centeredness are rooted in the unavoidable fact that the ruler and the ruling group actualize their own power of being when they actualize the power of being of the whole community they represent.(Welch, 1990, p. 119)

Welch connects this valorization of the "universal integration" to the violence and coercion that may lead to the destruction of humanity through nuclear war:

> No imagination can grasp the amount of suffering and destruction of structure, life and meaning that is inevitably connected with the growth of empires . . . The tragic consequences of their conflict (the United States and the Soviet Union) are noticeable in every historical group and every individual human being, and they may become destructive for mankind itself.(Welch, 1990, p. 119)

Paul Tillich affirms this effort and rejects a particularistic or pacifist option. According to Welch his reasons for rejection are explicitly theological. Welch states: "Though possibly destructive, the power of empire is akin to the power of God: both are affirmations of being against the forces of nonbeing."(Welch, 1990, p. 119) She and other feminist theologians challenge the audacity of those activists and theologians who unreservedly value the finite

and consistently acknowledge both the limits and the value of what they believe are attempts to establish justice. Instead, Welch worships "the web of life or the dance of life" as Niebuhr values "the source and slayer of all."

Niebuhr holds:

> What is it that is responsible for this passing, that dooms our human faith to frustration? . . . Against it there is no defense. This reality, this nature of things, abides when all else passes. It is the source of all things and the end of all . . (Welch, 1990, p. 121)

Welch elaborates "solidarity and difference" as a sustained work to transform the work of injustice; an alternative ethical sensibility and a radically different religious imagination that values finitude, interdependence, change, and particularity.(Welch, 1990, p. 122) Her work entails an action of "communicative ethics" for responsible action. It is the "in-between" or the material interaction between multiple communities with divergent principles, norms, and more that becomes essential for foundational moral critique. This is a combination of pluralism and social responsibility whereby partners in moral dialogue become aware of the flaws in their own culture; the recognition that critique runs two ways and that persons affected by decision-making are assumed to be fundamentally the same. Our relation to the other is governed by the norms of formal equality and reciprocity: each is entitled to expect and to assume from us what we can expect and assume from him or her. Partners in

moral dialogue must be keenly attuned to what Carol Gilligan refers to as the "concrete other":

> The standpoint of the concrete other, by contrast, requires us to view each and every rational being as an individual with a concrete history, identity and affective-emotional constitution. In assuming this standpoint, we abstract from what constitutes our commonality. We seek to comprehend the needs of the other, his or her motivations, what she or he searches for, and what she or he desires. Our relation to the other is governed by the norms of equality and complementary reciprocity: each is entitled to expect and to assume from the other forms of behavior through which the other feels recognized and confirmed as a concrete, individual being with specific needs, talents and capacities . . .The norms of our interactions are . . . friendship, love and care . . . The corresponding moral feelings are those of love, care and sympathy and solidarity.(Welch, 1990, pp. 127-128)

Other suggestions are given by Beverly Harrison who reminds us of the significance of a "critical history" in taking a "standpoint epistemology" of "the concrete other" or Buber's "imagining the real." Moral reasoning requires dialogue with actual members of different communities. For, we are not only members of different groups but also our groups are related to each other within networks of hierarchy and exploitation. We must support the collective telling of stories as our foundation for seeing and then challenging patterns of systemic injustice:

> 'Official' history suppresses the stories of resistance and dissent against the status quo and presents the past either as the triumph of the deserving or as inevitable. Critical history breaks open the past, in its full complexity, and re-presents that past as bearing a story of human

> struggle against domination. Even failed resistance bears powerful evidence of human dignity and courage that informs our contemporary vocations. (Welch, 1990, p. 128)

From those who courageously face and struggle against structural oppression, our first affirmation must be the recognition of only a small chance of ever in our lifetimes overcoming structural oppression. This moral tradition of affirmation illuminates our heritage of imaginative resistance. It is an expression of an "ethic of risk," of "sheer holy boldness," that defines responsible action within the limits of bounded power:

> . . . the nature of responsible action when control is impossible and name the resources that evoke persistent defiance and resistance in the face of repeated defeats. (Welch, 1990, p. 19)

Welch describes this moral tradition of black African-American women as picking up where much white middle-class thought stops: "The horizon of action is recognition that we cannot imagine how we will win": Mildred Taylor's Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry conveys the wisdom found in an "ethic of risk." Taylor depicts the courage of men and women who continued to struggle against the evil of racism when it was impossible for them to imagine even its partial eradication. She states the intent of the novel is to remind us of the heritage of clear-sightedness, of dignity and resistance, that formed the foundation for the civil rights movement. Here we learn that work for justice cannot be left to a few. Justice

is not merely the province of professional activists, but a dimension of the lives of everyone in a particular community. Work for justice is intrinsic to what is meant to be fully engaged with life, fully responsive to the challenge and support of life in community.

Such situations call for the recognition that we cannot guarantee decisive change; however, the alternative--to stop resisting, to turn from rage and forego resistance is to die. This death is not a physical death but the death of imagination, the death of caring, and the death of the ability to love and the ability to possess the secret of joy.

> For if we cease resisting, we lose the ability to imagine a world that is any different than that of the present; we lose the ability to imagine strategies of resistance and ways of sustaining each other in the long struggle for justice. We lose the ability to care, to love life in all its forms. We cannot numb our pain at the degradation of life without numbing our joy at its abundance.(Welch, 1990, p. 20)

Welch outlines an "ethic of risk" as characterized by three elements, each of which is essential to maintaining resistance in the face of overwhelming odds: a redefinition of responsible action, grounding in community, and strategic risk-taking. Responsible action does not mean the certain achievement of desired ends but the creation of a matrix in which further actions are possible, the creation of the conditions of possibility for desired change. (Welch, 1990, p. 21)

These affirmations, of course, are not for timid ears but only for those who daily witness the hurt, pain and ever-increasing struggle of lives that become impacted by the numbness of our critical history and are ready to respond with every pore of their being. Our resistance forms a wisdom working; a knowing based on our own covenant for life which liberates persons and allows them to find their own power and exercise it in ways that cannot yet be imagined, specified or predicted.

> The prophet is engaged in a battle for language, in an effort to create a different epistemology out of which another community might emerge. The prophet is not addressing behavioral problems. He is not even pressing for repentance. He has only the hope that the ache of God could penetrate the numbness of history. He engages not in scare or threat but only in a yearning that grows with and out of pain.(Brueggemann, 1978, p. 59)

Brueggemann holds, that in order to break our historical numbness, negativity must be embraced by public articulation. As a people, we are fearful and ashamed; "the pain and the regret denied only serves to immobilize." He brings forth the riddle and insight of biblical faith which is the awareness that "only anguish leads to life, only grieving leads to joy, and only embraced endings permit new beginnings."(Brueggemann, 1978, p. 60) It is from this prophetic imagination that I acknowledge my culturally defined "appropriate role" and participation within the office curriculum as a woman, a

student and teacher. Gerda Lerner elucidates the significance of this problem:

> Where there is no precedent, one cannot imagine alternatives to existing conditions. It is this feature of male hegemony which has been most damaging to women and has ensured their subordinate status for millennia. The denial to women of their history has reinforced their acceptance of the ideology of patriarchy and has undermined the individual woman's sense of self-worth. Men's version of history, legitimized as the 'universal truth,' has presented women as marginal to civilization and as the victim of historical process. To be so presented and to believe it is almost worse than being entirely forgotten. The picture is false, on both counts, as we now know, but women's progress through history has been marked by their struggle against this disabling distortion.(Lerner, 1986, p. 223)

During these past years, I have yet to encounter any textbook or office curriculum which included to any extent the history of the secretary. Traditionally, our curriculum has been designed to excessively focus on behavioral competencies. These competencies have been directly related to measurable skills, the external material world of the "I-It." Recognition of internal skills or the lived experience of the female person becomes devalued and subsumed in the everydayness of our taken-for-granted world. While in this external, analytical state of knowing, the language of coercion takes precedent over against the language of metaphor. Everywoman as secretary and her Be-ingness becomes suppressed so deeply that we no longer realize the potentials of our own existence. As women, we can no longer experience

our own experience but simply practice the proper behavior. Clearly the agencies of privilege are not interested in what people experience but in their behavior, which can be managed.

Thus, not only to speak metaphorically but also concretely about the "real deathliness that hovers over us and gnaws within us" is to speak out of an E-motion of rage which eventually moves through and resolves itself in and out of an anguish and passion of God, a transforming empowerment. Brueggemann points to Genesis, Chapters 2 through 3, which is a story concerning "the wanting of all knowledge and life delivered to our royal management."(Brueggemann, 1978, p. 50)

Both the disabling distortions of our own reality and greed for cognitive claims continue to keep many women and their children living in poverty and shame. From this our real and primal ground, the original forces of our own lives, our attention should be turned. Our present situation alone provides the "turn toward" our social-ethical crisis of massive suffering, widespread oppression and alienation in our emerging global culture which furnishes the "educative material of the hour," the criterion for curriculum selection.

As educators, we must assume responsible leadership by encouraging critical reflection and a public consciousness. We must begin by seeking out and acknowledging our "dangerous memory" and responding with significant questions which demand the mutual respect of partners in moral dialogue. Our material interaction will lead to the revealing aspects of our

curriculum which have up to this time gone unnoticed or have been a difference of concern. Some questions that I believe would lead to moral dialogue are the following: Whose interest does this knowledge found within our classrooms serve? Who has access to this knowledge? How is this knowledge reproduced in the classroom? How do classroom relations serve to parallel and reproduce social relations in a wider society? How do the prevailing methods of evaluation serve to legitimate existing forms of knowledge? What are the contradictions that exist between ideology embodied in the office curriculum and the objective reality? These questions need to be addressed for there is no such thing as a neutral educational process.(Giroux, 1981, p. 59)

Certainly these critical questions provide us with particular kinds of knowledge which enable us to become more aware of our positions within the culture and more articulate concerning our needs. However, these questions alone remain insufficient for creating a more just society and in turn educational environment. In The Salt-Eaters, Toni Cade Bambara writes about the value of combining political education with the study of African spiritual wisdom. She imagines a school or clinic where the dignity of each person is no longer destroyed by racism and offers a concrete model of what is sought on a larger scale. Such achievements enlarge the imagination and offer glimpses of an equitable social structure. Bambara speaks of a "sporting power" that

encourages others to explore their own powers and exercise it in ways that cannot yet be imagined.(Welch, 1990, p. 21)

Now, how we come to know shifts from the pragmatic, objective technique to the material of life. This is a different sort of soul searching assessment which seeks genuine compassion and wisdom through our imagination and through a partnership of moral dialogue. I believe a lead-in clue to these values may be found in Harold Rugg's model of Imaginative Creation, a description of the creative process whereby humankind has the power to create new patterns of thought. Rugg introduced into Dewey's rational deliberation, "the illuminating flash of insight which suddenly reveals to the artist a conception, perhaps indefinite, of the meaning toward which he is groping." Here, knowing was equated with a "primal awareness" or intuition, and intense feeling of the object "through our body tendencies and stresses." In his theorem of the transliminal mind Rugg describes this problem solving process:

> The illuminating flash occurs at a critical threshold of the conscious-nonconscious continuum on which all of life is lived. . . My study turned the theorem into a postulate that all human experience is lived not on a dual conscious-nonconscious continuum, but that three regions are now distinguishable upon it--two end sections, the conscious and the unconscious, connected by a dynamic, transliminal ante-chamber in which the creative flash occurs. . . My study suggests that the phenomenon is identical with the Taoist's state of 'no-mind,' the state of 'letting things happen.' **This is the state wherein we know before we know we know. It is the quiet mind of concentration of attention. I call it the transliminal mind--the**

> **mind across the threshold between the conscious and the nonconscious.** (Rugg, 1963, p. 292-293)

In the deepest sense it was "a grasp of significant relationships." Rugg felt this intense penetration of the object of interest "looking until it burns into my head a waiting which brought forth the surface characteristics to inner relationships." He seemed to detect and to understand the tension between waiting--letting be (meditative) as opposed to controlling (calculative).(Rosario, 1988, p. 343)

Until our educational discourse becomes a curriculum of inclusion instead of exclusion, then partners in moral dialogue, mutuality and trust cannot exist among us. Up to now, our learning structures have been closed and have encouraged submissiveness, a lack of ability to raise problems and therefore our disability to critically reflect on the taken-for-granted aspects of our daily life. Our curriculum discourages cooperation and instead fosters competition which pits women against women, deters open discussion and virtually produces "good little secretaries who won't make waves." Linda Vali suggests:

> Rather than being characterized by drill, rote-learning, and closed task structures, **education** could only occur when critical consciousness is fostered through an open-discussion, problem-solving, inquiry approach to learning. The problems to be solved would be derived from the students' experiences of the sexual division of labor, and the technical and social relations in production. This educative approach would offer students skills and knowledge not just to **do** their jobs, but to **think** about their jobs: their nature, purpose,

> construction, and the relations they embody. (Vali, 1986, p. 202)

We must remember that we are in a critical period for human survival, acutely aware of the dangers of annihilation that face our species. Those dangers are intimately connected with our own desires of mastery and possession. It appears we have acquired enormous dominion over other life systems while we seen incapable of even imagining our existence as shared. A new model for human existence--grounded in the ideals of personal authority, our interdependence, appreciation for difference and diverse beauty--may contribute to a new vision for personal being through Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations.

Education means a covenant with life and from this my educational world-view stands. Responsibility speaks from a dialogue of personal authority. There must be a "genuine response" to my call. My call comes from afar to wake up, to become attentive to every concrete hour of my days. I must remember survival and the need to be present and thus meet situations as a moment "to go up to and into." I must face creation as it happens. Creation happens as speech in the everydayness of my life.

> What we say in this way with the being is our entering upon the situation, into the situation, which has at this moment stepped up to us, whose like has not yet been. (Buber, 1992, p. 55)

My work is never finished; it only becomes tempered by lived life. It is only here that each of us can realize the full potential of each moment--the not yet--as we respond and answer with our lives, our Being-in-Living Relations. I continue to answer the call. . . .

CHAPTER IV

VITA ACTIVA
A LIVING CURRICULUM

The Present Envisioning the Future--

> All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them.
>
> Isak Dinesen

> (For in every action what is primarily intended by the doer,whether he acts from natural necessity or out of free will, is the disclosure of his own image. Hence it comes about that every doer, in so far as he does, takes delight in doing; since everything that is desires its own being, and since in action the being of the doer is somehow intensified, delight necessarily follows. . . . Thus, nothing acts unless [by acting] it makes patent its latent self.)
>
> Dante

I plan to conclude at the beginning with a **hermeneuein**, an exposition which brings tidings because it can listen actively to a message. This final chapter will be in response to the question WHAT ARE WE DOING? I will start within the area of education, specifically dialogues with Southern women teachers from the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, each representing overtones of gender, race and class. I will then move toward a brief summary of my attempts in previous chapters with a final explication of lessons I have learned while completing this research.

My vantage point will be from a teacher's perspective concerning the consequences of women's labor, the work process and action in relation to our human condition. Using the term vitae activa Hannah Arendt describes what is most basic to human activity:

> . . . labor, work and action . . . are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to man. (Arendt, 1958, p. 7)

Arendt clearly defines these three elements of the vitae activa and thus our human condition:

> Labor is the activity which corresponds to the biological process of the human body, whose spontaneous growth, metabolism, and eventual decay are bound to the vital necessities produced and fed into the life process by labor. The human condition of labor is life itself. (Arendt, 1958, p. 7)

Marilyn Waring, a feminist economist, elucidates the skewed definitions of work and labor that are used by economists which result in an equally skewed concept of production. She reports that economists usually use the term "labor" to mean only those activities that produce surplus value or profit in the marketplace. Consequently, labor (work) that does not produce profits is not considered production. Therefore, the labor of childbirth or the woman in labor--"the reproducer, sustainer, and nurturer of human life--does not produce anything." She continues: "By this

failure to acknowledge the primacy of reproduction, the male face of economics is fatally flawed."(Waring, 1952, p. 28)

These basic definitions and concepts in the male analyses of production and reproduction also reflect an unquestioned acceptance of biological determinism. Women's domestic labor of household and child care work are seen as an extension of their physiology. From this institutionalized invisibility of women's labor, their labor becomes reduced to a taken-for-granted interaction with nature. Thus, women are perceived as playing no active or conscious part in the process. (Waring, 1952, p. 29) Through this ideological hegemony, social control derives ultimately not from the possession of wealth, but by the control of reproduction distributed by an elaborate system of norms and imperatives.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman as cited in Waring called this a particularly masculine view:

> Following that pitiful conception of labour as a curse, comes the very old and androcentric habit of despising it as belonging to women and then to slaves . . . for long ages men performed no productive industry at all, being merely hunters and fighters.
>
> Our current teachings in the infant science of political economy are naively masculine. They assume as unquestionable that "the economic man" will never do anything unless he has to; will only do it to escape pain or attain pleasure; and will, inevitably, take all he can get and do all he can to outwit, overcome, and if necessary destroy his antagonist.(Waring, 1952, p. 26)

Arendt distinguishes work from labor:

> Work is the activity which corresponds to the unnaturalness of human existence. . . . Work provides an 'artificial' world of things, distinctly different from all natural surroundings. Within its borders each individual life is housed, while this world itself is meant to outlast and transcend them all. The human condition of work is worldliness.(Arendt, 1958, p. 7)

Work in relation to the *vita activa* manifests itself in this world of things produced by human activity; but these material things owe their existence solely to humankind and nevertheless constantly condition their human makers. Consequently, Arendt states:

> Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality . . .
>
> Plurality is the condition of human action because we are all the same, that is human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live.(Arendt, 1958, p. 8)

Action creates the possibility of remembrance, that is, for history. And, it is to the numbness of our historical consciousness as women teachers that I seek insight. Far from being a final statement, this writing represents a meager attempt at a new departure. A "standpoint epistemology" which claims that to ignore history represents an assault on our ability to think. This is no small claim for the consequences become a confinement of our own experience as persons. The fabric of our lives, its potential and will, becomes

undermined by the logic of technique; a status quo rationality which focuses on behavior which, as we know, can be controlled. It is my intent to reveal and to bear the ordinary experiences of daily life in order to better understand the present moment in which we live. Our vision for the future depends upon our ability to remember.

As we witness the close of the Modern Era and approach the Twenty-first Century, the moment is ripe to reconsider our past experiences in relation to what Hannah Arendt refers to as "our newest experiences and most recent fears." Arendt holds:

> This, obviously, is a matter of both thought, and thoughtlessness,--the heedless recklessness or hopeless confusion or complacent repetition of 'truths' which have become trivial and empty . . .(Arendt, 1958, p. 5)

I believe our current condition which Arendt describes is the result of a crisis in the ability of American people to remember those lessons of the past that illuminate the developmental preconditions of individual liberty and social freedom. We have forgotten the questions that deliver the answers to our everyday taken-for-granted reality.

Thus, I will join Arendt in a reconsideration of our human condition in relation to our human plurality, the basic condition of both speech and action which possess the paradoxical twofold character of both equality and distinction. I stand in dialogue as a Being-in-Living

Relations located within an apex polar region of the *vitae activa* and the *vitae contemplativa*. My use of these ancient terms revokes the heavy laden tradition which leads to connotative meanings and assumptions that "the same central human preoccupation must prevail in all activities of men, since without one comprehensive principle no order could be established." (Arendt, 1958, p. 17)

My use of the term *vita activa* presupposes that the concern underlying all its activities is not the same as and is neither superior nor inferior to the central concern of the *vita contemplativa* but exists as polar forces in constant flux. This means that contemplation and passivity are not understood as inaction but as an active receptivity which serves as an important mode of action.

It is my conviction that born in dialogue is a living rejoinder which provides a certain tensionality between the *vitae activa* and the *vitae contemplativa*. The word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates. Burbules explains this connection more fully by stating: "In other words, we find our language already used, and through language we are joined to previous as well as present speakers." (Burbules, 1993, p. 11)

In dialogue as relational, Burbules examines the etymology of the term "dialogue" itself. "Dia" means "between, across, or through," and hence the key idea

expressed is of spanning or connecting. "Logos" is a term not only for "word or speech," but also for "thought, reason, and judgment." From a Heideggerian view, "logos" becomes a particular way in which credibility is established in concrete speech situations--"Logos" lets something be seen--for the speaker or for those who speak with each other--"Logos" acquires the meaning of relation and relationship. (Burbules, 1993, p. 15)

It is here that my concern for human plurality remains. More specifically, not only do the stories told by persons who possess their own uniqueness but also they also reveal timely outcomes for all of us who educate. However, dialogue is guided by an attitude that values the relationship of the reasoners over any particular outcome and is marked by attachment and connection rather than separation and abstraction. Hence, from the process of dialogue, educators can come to understand how to develop new practices while still making use of the resources embodied in the old. It is here that a new voice, a place currently unrecognized, from which to speak about the nature of our lives together may be imagined. This process becomes significant in that it touches upon our moral and spiritual crisis in education and therefore the world in which we live. My dialogical position implies a person being addressed to our basic condition of human plurality. Fundamental to this salutation is the disclosure of the agent in speech and action; the ways in which we do

things together and how we reproduce those ways in what we do --"the essential recursiveness of social life;" and, how these contribute to our current human condition of misery, dis[ease], hunger, poverty and war. As a witness to the collapse of Communism not by force but by life, by the human spirit, by the imprisonment of a uniform ideology, Vaclav Havel holds:

> This powerful signal is coming at the eleventh hour. We all know civilization is in danger. The population explosion and the green house effect, holes in the ozone and AIDS, the threat of nuclear terrorism and the dramatically widening gap between the rich north and the poor south, the danger of famine, the depletion of the biosphere and the mineral resources of the planet, the expansion of commercial television culture and the growing threat of regional wars--all these, combined with thousands of other factors represent a general threat to mankind.(Havel, 1992)

Havel concludes that "things must be given a chance to present themselves as they are . . . We must see the pluralism of the world." He believes "human uniqueness, human action and the human spirit must be rehabilitated." Furthermore, he posits:

> Soul, individual spirituality, first-hand personal insight into things; the courage to be himself and go the way his conscience points, humility in the face of the mysterious order of Being, confidence in its natural direction and, above all, trust in his own subjectivity as his principal link with the subjectivity of the world--these are the qualities that politicians of the future should cultivate.(Havel, 1992)

It is from this position that I begin to make meaning out of the various dialogues with women teachers from the first half of the century. My intent is to move back to the present in order to discover new ways of thinking about our lives together in the twenty-first century--a living curriculum for liberatory praxis.

A Dialogue on Racism and Women's Suffrage

Dialogue is a type of communicative relations that we enter into and possibly by its process, at times, become transformed by the moment at hand. Dialogue allows a grasping of the essence of the present moment which bonds human spirit with both a deep and intense concern. And, this was my experience with Mrs. Grady Friday. She remembers attending school in 1906; therefore, she is approximately ninety-five years of age. As I waited to enter the glassed-in front door, I could see her place the needlepoint on the chair where she was seated. Her home is located on Trade Street, a small main street in Dallas, NC. Mrs. Friday's immediate concern for me was the traffic which might occur across the street because of a forthcoming funeral. With her parked car in the driveway, she remembers these streets when there were only horse and buggies to be considered and the railroad was the primary source of transportation to any place of distance. I began to get a feel for her life span--almost the entire century. Instantly the thought of this pulls me into amazement--of all that she has lived to experience. Our discussion began easily

about what it was like at the turn of the century to be the daughter of a local postmaster, of middling-class, a white woman and teacher in the South:

> Teaching was about the only thing that women did outside the home then. Oh, they were a clerk in a store, maybe, just something of that sort. But in the business world you didn't see many women at all. It was mostly men out there.

Mrs. Friday was mystified as to how or when it happened that women came into the public space. She said it did happen, of course, but it was so gradual, so seamless, an almost invisible occurrence. This change appeared to be a natural turn of events as today rendering itself as unaccountable, as commonplace. This movement of women into public space was puzzling and unexplainable for her. From this conundrum she moved our dialogue toward a description of a school she had visited as a small child:

> South Carolina had a school, a short term in the winter and a short term in the summer. And they had one teacher, and often it was a man and he taught everything. It was just one big room and everybody was in that . . . They just went from one thing to the other.

Although she did not mention the cotton crop or what was known as "cotton pickin season," the schools in the South did schedule around these harvest seasons. However, she reported that her first grade teacher was a woman and that each teacher had about two grades. Their curriculum consisted of reading, writing and arithmetic and later some geometry. She attended

Winthrop College immediately after high school fulfilling her mother's lost dream.

I asked her about the 1920 flappers . . . who were they?

> Honey, when I was at Winthrop, you weren't much of a flapper because they were so strict! We wore uniforms, and you didn't dare . . . ! You had to buy a uniform coat, that was a dress code. And we all said when we got out of Winthrop, never again, not anything else navy. . . . . The first suit I bought was navy.

She commented that her hair was not cut until after she graduated from college and what a help it would have been to have had it cut sooner--a liberating moment for most women. She graduated in 1920 with a degree in music and began her teaching career in 1921. Her first teaching position in Orangeburg, South Carolina, brought $90 per month plus board. However, jobs were relatively plentiful as teachers were scarce in this Southern area, and she was able to switch schools several times during the twenties at her own discretion. In 1925 she was married and did not teach again for nine years or until her children were in school.

Here, the basic elements of a white middle class woman's dilemma surfaced as our dialogue progressed. The contradictions of her diligent efforts to achieve in her studies--fulfilling her mother's desire to attend Winthrop, the knowledge she had gained in her studies as a teacher and all the other ways she had cultivated her talents and intellectual powers had come to an anticipated crossroads

between the private and public domain. Marriage and motherhood precluded these achievements for which she characterized with much pride. She expressed considerable dismay concerning how schools have gradually changed and she felt it was due to the changes in home life--mothers leaving the home for work:

> When I sit here, and think of what goes on in schools now, I couldn't take it. School now isn't what it was then. . . .Discipline is the big thing. And that comes from the home . . . . Maybe I, I'm not to say it, because I went to work, but a lot of times, it's the mother being out of the home.

She quickly added:

> But I always had somebody, my children were taken care of. Either my mother was here, or I had somebody who was here to take care of my children.

Her words hold the "time ole story" of the double bind and the correspondences and contradictions of women's appropriate place as outlined by their labor, the work process and class hierarchy in our culture. These words provide a theoretical foundation for examining the dialectical relationship between economic production and social and cultural reproduction.

However, the cutting edge of endless stories such as these dwells in the ideological hegemony of womanhood, particularly found in education, inspired by assumptions, beliefs, and social processes that exist in a dialectical tension of correspondences and contradictions which enhance

notions of an individualized sense of consciousness. A consciousness which lacks an inclusive historical context; a fragmented foundation from which to speak about one's life. These gaps between the creation of daily life sustain a deadly silence--an unspoken confusion which presently manifests itself as questions of character, of moral resolve, and will--as actions suffer the bittersweet anguish of a self-consoling guilt. Alas, the spoken story becomes a relentless defense of doubted human dignity as workers and as women.

Unavoidedly, because of this break in thought, this lack of clarity and skills appropriate to exercising social responsibility, our dialogue deviated temporarily to mere conversation, a dogmatic indulgence of sentimentality of "things aren't what they used to be" or how values have shifted, a sentimentalism which Matthew Fox defines as "representing feeling by itself, alone and determinedly separate from any sense of responsibility." (Purpel, 1989, p. 42) Unfortunately, this disconnectedness relates to most persons who do not understand the locus of these feelings. This condition, which mirrored by our culture, is understandable with the stress in schools on competition, individuality, achievement and personal success. As David Purpel holds:

> The emphasis on sentimentalism is the emotional dimension of individuality, privatism, and competition in that it seriously deemphasizes mutuality, interdependence, and the human origin of

> culture. Sentimentality allows the underlying problems to go unchallenged.(Purpel, 1989, p. 43)

Compassion which exists in a magnetic polar tension with sentimentality as defined by Fox:

> Acknowledges the social reality of connectedness, the political reality of human relationships, and the moral impulse to care and nurture; compassion is feelings with moral meaning, . . . (Purpel, 1989, p. 42)

Mrs. Friday once again confirms a frequently voiced notion whereby the backlash of women's movement from the private to the public realm becomes viewed as a primary exacerbating force in the deterioration of family life values. Thus, women become characterized as the root antagonist of our culture. She is unable to perceive this situation in any other way--a limited view nourished by our culture with its insistent fundamental way of thinking, a way of thinking with a distorted emphasis on science and rationality which, too, has been simultaneously robbed of its true essence. However, according to David Purpel there is yet another educational orientation that we have not yet addressed; "namely, the issue of reasoning from a faith, of helping people to consider the major question that transcends science."(Purpel, 1989, p. 59) Here, he elaborates:

> We are not here opposing faith to reason but rather examining the foundation and underpinnings of reason, that which provides its roots and substance. Nor do we wish to glibly equate faith with creed or a belief structure; faith here is

> meant to be closer to the concept of trust than to belief.(Purpel, 1989, p. 59)

This way of thinking views faith as originating out of a primal "concern for caring and trusting and 'the search for an overarching integrating and grounding trust in a center value and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and meaning.'" (Purpel, 1989, p. 59) This power may be given meaning by the moral and spiritual boundaries which include our ability to respond to our most human impulse--that is to be ever present to the conditions surrounding us. This action concerns the courageous decision to accept the challenge--the challenge "to be our brothers' keeper and our sisters' keeper."(Purpel, 1989, p. 45) Our way of thinking acquires a critical dimension as we begin to acknowledge the social reality of our interconnectedness, the political reality of human relationships and the moral impulse to care and to nurture. From this vantage point I asked Mrs. Friday to tell me more about the 1920's in relation to the advent of women changing roles--the rumblings of the suffrage movement. I suggested that it seemed to be a high time for women. They were eager in thinking that they were going to be more active in the public sector. Women were teaching and becoming clerical workers, but then at the same time there was a backlash--women were leaving the home only to assume the heavier burden of dual roles as mothers and career women.

And, it seemed that men didn't think women ought to have the vote. How was this?

> I voted the first time women voted. . . .
>
> The men didn't want women to have the vote. I know there was some feeling among men about this. I think one thing was, a lot of things happened around the election polls, where there were usually just men. They didn't want the women to be there. That might have been just an excuse. I don't know whether it was the reason.

Then, very spontaneously, Mrs. Friday pulled toward me as if she were getting ready to relay a secret. In a whispering voice she moved our dialogue from women's suffrage to a childhood horror story--one that she would never forget!

> I'll tell you something I saw once. We always had horses at our house, and down behind the barn was a blacksmith shop. One morning our doctor called my father and said there were two black men taken out of the jail and hanged down there last night. The minute that Papa heard it, he put the telephone down and started to go down to the blacksmith's shop.

She and the other siblings followed behind to see what had happened:

> We, his three children, followed and saw them [negro men] tied by their necks to hitching posts with their mouths stuffed. As children we were never told why this happened. Even now I remember it as an awesome sight.

With her eyes still filled with disbelief, Mrs. Friday reached for her mouth as if to relive this horrifying event. I asked what explanation her father had given to them about

this nightmare. Moving her head in a negative manner from side to side she responded, "It was never discussed among the children" inferring in her voice--"children were to be seen and not heard."

My question remains--why and how did Mrs. Friday know to connect these two stories--women's suffrage and slavery in the South? This was a clear curiosity to me. She had mentioned earlier in our conversation that communications was extremely slow and even though her family did have a party-line phone they received only one newspaper per week and television was still nonexistent. This gives me some feel for what "Mr. Sears Catalogue" must have meant to the social condition of these secluded rural people. Mrs. Friday had been "re-membering" and moving quite spontaneously in her dialogue in an endeavor to relate life during this time to me. I felt that she had! She had literally pulled me into the moment of her isolated repulsion.

Angela Davis clearly makes the historical connection between the Women's Rights Campaign and the 1840 Anti-Slavery Convention. No doubt the U.S. women who had expected to participate in the London conference were quite furious when they found themselves excluded by majority vote, "fenced off behind a bar and a curtain similar to those used in churches to screen the choir from public gaze". . . .(Davis, 1981, pp. 46-47)

> 'The leading male radicals, those most concerned with social inequalities . . . also discriminate against women' . . . it was an inspiration that had struck Lucretia Mott long before 1840.(Davis, 1981, p. 47)
>
> Although they were defeated at the London convention, the abolitionist women did discover evidence that their past struggles had achieved a few positive results. . . For they were supported by some of the male anti-slavery leaders, who opposed the move to exclude them. . . Not all of the men, therefore, were the 'bigoted Abolitionists' to whom Stanton refers to in her historical accounts.(Davis, 1981, pp. 47-48)

Davis reports that Frederick Douglases' willingness to second Stanton's motion and to employ his oratorical abilities in defense of women's right to vote was the only prominent figure who agreed that the Seneca Falls Convention should call for women's right to vote. Therefore, the advocacy of women's rights became embodied in an embryonic movement supported by Black people who were also fighting for their own freedom.(Davis, 1981, p. 50)

Interestingly, the emphatic focus of the Seneca Falls Declaration was the institution of marriage and its many injurious effects on women: marriage robbed women of their property rights, making wives economically--as well as morally--dependent on their husbands. Husbands had the right to demand absolute obedience from wives and the right to punish their wives as laws were almost entirely based on male supremacy. The Declaration concluded its list of grievances with an evocation of women's mental and psychological dependence which has left them with little "confidence and

self-respect."(Davis, 1981, p. 53) In support of this viewpoint Gerda Lerner argues that "women's reproductive power was the first private property amassed by men, and that domination over women provided the model for men's enslavement of other men."(Waring, 1952, p. 28) Gerda Lerner posits:

> We know that mental constructs usually derive from some model in reality and consist of a new ordering of past experience. That experience which was available to men prior to the invention of slavery, was the subordination of women of their own group.(Lerner, p. 77, 1986)

Thus, from this subordinate stance, Davis holds that the importance of this conference lies in the articulated consciousness of women's rights during the nineteenth century. However, in all of its influence the Declaration did fail to recognize what still remains today as a critical omission--the potential for an integrated women's movement which would have included working-class women as well as their black women counterparts. Davis makes this pivotal connection:

> The leaders of the women's rights movement themselves did not suspect that the enslavement of Black people in the South, the economic exploitation of Northern workers and the social oppression of women might be systematically related."(Davis, 1981, p. 66)

Ironically, my next interview would communicate the voice of "the last of the Southern belles": A Sabbath-school daughter of a prominent small town medical doctor; the ideal white-aristocrat gentlewoman and teacher--my mother's most

special teacher of the mid-1930's and early 1940's. In our dialogue, she would unwittingly recreate the dramatic shifts in personal, social and cultural experiences of upper white middle class women in the South in relation to the traumatic effects of rapid industrialization and, more specifically, how war and the postwar experience in the United States and the schizophrenic ideology of "pure white womanhood" required by the slave system intersected.

A Dialogue on Southern Women and the Learning Experience

I must first begin with a past prologue of experiences as told by my mother concerning the life of Mary Frances Hord-Cothran who was her dearly beloved teacher and friend. In the early 1940's Mary Frances taught my mother by a tacit method known as social osmosis, a gradual absorption of the "cult of femininity" through a semipermeable membrane known as class culture. This enculturated knowledge of attitudes and values would later become a critical influence on Mother's ability to move from sales clerk in the five and dime and textile worker to school secretary and bookkeeper. During these high school days my mother, who lived in the mill village along with her widowed mother, would travel with her teacher, Mary Frances, to her parents' home in Kings Mountain to spend the weekend. Since then, the Hord home has been converted into the small town's library. But, for Mother, these weekend visits were filled with fond remembrances of fun and excitement much like

a fairytale, storybook existence--far removed from the realities of life on "the mill hill."

Governor Hoey would come to court Mary Frances bearing marvelous gifts such as fine jewelry and silk stockings that were virtually inaccessible to almost everyone because of World War II rationings. Mother retells the time Mary Frances asked her to go shopping at Christmas in Charlotte. Even though Mary Frances offered to lend Mother shopping money, she had no hope as to when or how she would ever be able to repay Mary Frances' generosity. Later, she would knit mother a beautiful red sweater vest which I now wear.

As I enter her home today in Shelby, North Carolina, she greets me with a warm hug and Southern hospitality. On her large dining table perfectly dressed in white linen, she has prepared homemade ham biscuits, strawberry ice cream on shortcake, tea and coffee. So, now, where did you first start to teach?

> I taught at West School, they called it, in Gastonia. I was the first new teacher they had in seven years . . .
>
> This was in 1935 . . .
>
> What grade did you teach?
>
> This was sixth and seventh grade, departmental work, because I couldn't get a job that year on my high school certificate, and so the superintendent of the schools, Mr. Grier, was a family friend, and that's where I got that job. And he gave me the departmental so I could work on my English certificate. But anyway . . .
>
> Was it hard to get jobs in 1935?

> Oh, yes, real hard . . . You were just lucky to get work. And you worked for $70 a month. And I tell you what, I really worked for that money, and I was about to turn myself against school teaching because of it. But see, I lived with my aunt over there, Mother's sister. And honey, if I didn't go home every weekend . . . see we ate our meals out. We had breakfast at her house, and they had box lunches at the school there for the teachers.

Compared to the 1920 interview, teaching positions had now slipped into economic scarcity with decreased amount of pay which made ends hard to meet. Life for her as a teacher seemed difficult as the allure of "woman's true profession" clouded itself with contradictory illusions. Schools had become the fiefdom of local area politicians who sat on boards of trustees which governed the school and gave jobs as rewards for votes. It appears the romantic Victorian ideology encouraging her to think of teaching as an extension of her life as a daughter and preparation for her true work of motherhood was beginning to resemble the subservient routine of factory work. This meant obediently carrying out orders from above. As Nancy Hoffman describes "the 'genial' principal forced a model teacher to become aware of how much she was subservient to a higher authority." (Hoffman, 1981, p. 209)

Mary Frances continues to elaborate her disgust with attitudes expressed by Mr. Abernathy, the school's principal:

> One of the first weeks I was following the principal in from the playground, and he was out there seeing about things, and I heard him remark to this little boy, I don't remember his name, but

> he called his name, and said, 'If you do that again, I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life.'
>
> And it horrified me so, that I sashayed right into the office and questioned him about it. And that was real brave for a first-year teacher to say such a thing. But, honey, I did and he was embarrassed to death.
>
> I said, 'Mr. Abernathy, I want to understand something. I was taught and brought up that we were supposed to lift people up, not knock them down, and I can't believe you said that on the playground.' And he just stuttered and turned red, and went on . . . I guess I surprised him. But, boy, from then on he handled me with silk gloves. And everybody thought I'd never get back another year. I stayed two years.

She continued to elaborate her position and to exhibit her independent air of class power:

> I have never worked in schools or anything just for the money part. Because I just loved being with the children, young people, so I just never think of that part of it. I just hope I can make ends meet. As I said, if I hadn't gone home every weekend, and one time I got so discouraged that Mr. Abernathy (who talked to that child), I went home that weekend and I just starved. I didn't want to teach another day. And my mother said, 'well you know you don't have to.' I just resented it so, but I feel like I not only helped the children by taking a stand, but I helped him out.

As a young, single woman Mary Frances left Gastonia and moved to Cherryville High School where she taught English, shorthand, typing--and my mother.

> I taught English, shorthand and typing, I did everything, put on the plays, put on the first May Day Program they ever had. I would stay at play practice until 11:00 at night, go home and grade papers until 3:00 in the morning. And nowadays it

> just kills me to have teachers that just throw them in the waste paper basket. I never did ask my children to do anything that I didn't think was important.

The dialogue continues to clarify:

> Did they have a vocational guidance counselor then, or . . .
>
> The men would usually have that, vocational subjects. That was either agriculture, the making of things, you know, woodwork and stuff.
>
> What about home economics?
>
> Why sure they had that when I was in school . . .

John Rury clarifies: "For better or for worse, the opening decades of the twentieth century witnessed the appearance of a distinctively female curriculum in American high schools."(Rury, 1991, p. 132) But, who were the teachers who taught these commercial subjects? In this case, an English/dramatic's teacher of upper white, middle-class heritage who in no way connected vocational education with her work. In fact, she believed it to be men's work. Thus, commercial education (typing and stenography) was not classified as vocational and was generally taught as a separate branch of the high school curriculum. In this respect, it reflects one of the clearest examples of how education supplied the labor market and its demand for female students who planned to enter the office. The blurring of class lines was an integral part of meeting the requirements of this demand. This meant "rubbing off rough edges" which

underscored the contempt associated with working class culture.

Mary Frances feels a resentment for teachers today who do not adhere to proper dress codes and those who project what she perceives as a lack of commitment to the profession. Once again, the aggravation surfaces toward other women teachers--a moralization of class difference. From this response an implied question arises "where have all the 'good' teachers gone?"

Beverly Harrison holds: "The 'good woman' came to be one who approximated rising bourgeois ideals, and those who could not were perceived as 'failed' women." (Harrison, 1985, pp. 47-48) Here the fixation of ideological hegemony about what women 'should be'--their "special nature" becomes reinforced and reified. This was particularly true in the South for the dominant plantation system which depended upon slavery for free labor; therefore, the subservience of women's proper place prevailed as it's model.

As always when the role of women is at issue, the reality of their lives rests elsewhere. The gap between the rising ideology and most women's actual experience becomes hardly noticed or ever commented upon as if women's lives possess a certain continuity that goes untouched by radical economic and political upheaval. Thus, the ways power and ideology isolate women across class boundaries continue to prevent a solidarity among women. The success or failure of one's encounter with

the world comes to be seen as the fruit of personal "character" and "virtue." Since economic success enables class mobility, this success becomes the guidepost for personal moral integrity.

During this period of time Mary Frances was not married nor did she have any children. The contradictions of the double bind was not yet a part of her lived experience. When she did marry and start her family, she would then begin her own kindergarten school in the playroom of her home.

Where did you go to college?

> Erskine College, an ARP Church School. But my kindergarten was just a marvel. I mean, I just had 5-year-olds and I taught that for fourteen years. I went from high school to kindergarten. And, honey, those little children really, the parents really appreciate you. Because, it's just unbelievable what a five-year-old can learn. I taught them conversational French.
>
> I always wanted to try kindergarten. When I got there, I decided I wasn't going to teach because I wanted to have my family. So, of course, if I had been real smart I'd have gone back and finished out my years, you know. But I didn't. I just didn't want to be bothered.
>
> Did you have that here in your home?
>
> Yes, in my playroom. See, my children were all in school except, Ginny. And I opened it for Ginny. Because I was going to have to take her across town. So, I thought, if I'm ever going to do it, it's going to be this year.
>
> So when everyone came to her house it was like having a giant party every day.
>
> We'd have a big tea party and play period. They learned a Bible verse, each letter of the alphabet, they knew all the Presidents of the US and some conversational French. They had rhythmic dancing

> and, honey, the ones that didn't know how to skate, I got on my skates, they brought theirs and we skated.
>
> And, you see, that way instead of going back to teaching I chose that because I could be here for my children when they came from school.
>
> Now what year did you start this?
>
> I guess around '58 . . . I had the best of both worlds.

Who could and can make choices such as these? The discovery of the child-centered family became possible only when some women began to have sufficient freedom from the economic pressures of basic survival. Over time this enabled their offsprings to opt out of rural apprentice labor. Beverly Harrison suggests that the Protestant Reformation "accelerated the hold of the child-centered domicile on European society" and defined it as the source of spirituality. Consequently, by the nineteenth century this powerful force became the purveyor of the child-centered home and the social ideal. While this normative ideal signified a given reality for only a few select women, the remainder of those women who lived on the edge of freedom did what they had to do to survive. There is no wonder why these women who lived their lives on the margin looked at their rich, middle-class counterparts with awe and envy. It was these same women who also become the source of social stigma.(Harrison, 1985, p. 45)

Our talk meshed the World War II years which once again thrust women into the many various roles to the Postwar years of the fifties and domestic bliss. As the fifties launched massive media campaigns depicting the middle-class ideal and capturing the hearts of many to get married, to buy homes and to become consumers, Dr. Spock redefined the ideal mother sending messages of guilt to those who could not live up to his script. Mary Frances followed this joyful description of domestic splendor with a flashback of postwar work:

> When you taught in the high school . . . when you were teaching the typing and the shorthand, were you the only one teaching these subjects?
>
> At that time. . . .Yes, and you know that was during when they had CC Camps. You know, soldier camps. They asked the schools to have night classes for these boys that were in service.
>
> They had them stationed all around, and there was a camp out from Cherryville, and they asked me about teaching night classes in typing.
>
> You mean for the veterans?
>
> Yes, for those CC Camps. And those boys came in, I even did that, and just for nothing at night. Some of them hadn't finished high school. So, anyway, I had 15 or 20 of them.
>
> And they were trying to retrain to get jobs?
>
> Well, yes, they were trying to keep them in school part time so that when they got out, they could go back to school [or work?]. It was an elective subject. . . But they were students that really wanted to, though.
>
> Employment was hard for everyone . . .

Our dialogue made visible the significant dimension of faith in the "educability of humanity." David Purpel outlines these two fundamental positions as revolving around both a conservative/ progressive continuum. The first is that only a carefully selected and prepared minority are able to deal responsibly with the ambiguities and sophistication of serious learning, while the other position holds that all people are capable and desirous of living a life of meaning and that all can be educated to be free and responsible. Purpel elucidates:

> This is the position that refuses to accept inherent inequality of people; those individuals who show contrary evidence are said to be victims of an oppressive system and of false consciousness. (Purpel, 1981, p. 10)

From this point of departure I, too, contend that it becomes the task of educators to provide the conditions necessary for each person to reach her full human potential. This position Dr. Purpel believes represents the struggle between different consciousness and orientations toward human nature and destiny. And, this he comments "means . . . .that when we talk about education the stakes are very high . . . for what we are talking about ultimately are the basic and most important questions of human existence." Purpel continues to target and specify my core experiences with women community college students in a highly technical curriculum:

> To trivialize education by obsessing on technical or superficial, symptomatic concerns is not only illogical but harmful: it distracts us from the responsibility to engage in serious dialogue on how the educational process can facilitate a world of love, justice and joy. (Purpel, 1981, p. 10)

Eventually this perspective leads to the conclusive question: "How much faith do we have in free expression and free inquiry as opposed to the kind of faith that leads to a view of education as acculturation?"(Purpel, 1981, pp. 10-11) The critical explication from this question remains in . . . "choosing a path where we can educate about what our culture is while helping to redefine it."(Purpel, 1981, p. 11)

Women's political and economic powerlessness becomes evidenced in the reality of their everyday lives and the myths that pervade that reality. Our lives will remain a deep source of social instability until all women across our culture begin to recognize that women's issue are everyone's issues. Educators need to begin to redress the injustices of women's dual roles and how it impacts the lives of each person in our society. This would mean an understanding and recognition of our interconnectedness. Until there is liberty for all, there will be liberty for none. Until then, women must continue to internalize a self-image of female impotence or bear the double load of social and domestic labor. In either case the myths of female identity that pervade our lives continue to be far removed from the reality of our existence. Nowhere could this be more evidenced than in my

next visit with Mrs. Emma Mann, a black teacher in the South during the early 1940's.

A Dialogue on Courage in Spite of Defeat

Emma Mann's words of moral wisdom and healing hope continue to echo a resounding message for all--"a tradition of strength and persistence that is one of the richest heritages of humankind."(Welch, 1990, p. 16)

As I left her home on a bright Saturday morning in May, several hours passed before I could manage to sort my thoughts or for that matter to speak. I suppose it was the experience of being there--in her home filled with family portraits, with her abiding spirit, and hearing her speak about her life--receiving her story in relation to others "cushioned by" and "grounded in" middle class privilege that had affected my mesmerized state:

> And how did you get to Atlanta, Georgia? Are you from Georgia?
>
> No, my native home was out here in Kings Mountain. I had a brother down in Millins, Georgia. He persuaded me to go to Morris Brown College. So, I went down there [by train], and that's where I graduated. I took two years business and then went back and finished up my college. I was down there for five years.
>
> I graduated from high school in 1934, at Lincoln Academy. It was a private school run by the American Missionary Association. When they gave it up the state took it over.
>
> So you graduated before public school really . . .
>
> That's right. I went to high school and college in [all black] private schools . . . There were

twenty-four who graduated from Lincoln Academy, sixteen girls and eight boys in 1934.

So, there seemed to be more girls going to school then?

At that time, yes there were.

Do you think the men may have been working or wonder why that was?

It seemed like the girls found out an opportunity they hadn't had before. So they were more enthusiastic. . . .It was a boarding school.

As Mrs. Mann relayed her educational history to me she confessed the reason she first studied commercial subjects at Morris Brown College. She felt that two years of schooling might be all she could afford to accomplish at the time.

At first I took all business courses; then I decided I didn't want to be straight business. I went back to finish up my college work. It took me five years to do it. Two years business, and the other three years to get my degree. . .

Well, honestly, when I went there, I just figured I couldn't go but two years, and that was the nearest I could do, was go to business and get out. But after I got there, I got a scholarship and they told me I could come back and finish and get my teacher's degree.

My first teaching certificate, my first check was $91 for the month. This was at Unity High School in Statesville. I taught business and social studies; I taught business and history . . . **but I don't like history**.

So, what did you do . . . ?

I taught it!

You just took the book and taught it, whatever it was.

> How did you teach them about their history? That wasn't in the textbook was it?
>
> No, we did what they called Negro history month, which was February. We had several classes and things on it. We had them to look up several things. We had them do special projects and look up things on Roland Hayes. Roland Hayes happened to be my husband's cousin, so they were fairly interested in that . . . He was a world renowned singer.

Mrs. Mann points to Roland Hayes's portrait hanging on a nearby wall in her home.

> It seems like black people were really able . . .
>
> That's the only thing they could do back then, to pursue their music. Because we used to sing with my high school octet; they called it. We went to several white churches, but we couldn't go unless we were asked to.

So, were most of your students women in your typing classes?

Mostly all women taking business.

Here our conversation shifted as I began to ask Mrs. Mann about how she "fit in" with these people as her fair skin color was very close to my own. Did she have problems with being so light within the black or white community?

> No. My education was financed, more or less, by white folks. They had those big conferences every summer, white and blacks. I just didn't . . . honestly, I knew about segregation, but it didn't bother me too much. And after I finished there with them, I branched out somewhere else and I could see the difference. Of course, out there everybody was somebody.
>
> At Lincoln Academy you felt comfortable because it was supported by a church group, supported by both black and white people?
>
> Yes, but see when the state took over, they made a difference.

How?

Well, they took over the academy. In fact, it became all black. Black instructors, all black students, and everything else.

So everything became separated . . .really separated. And it didn't come back together until about the 50's?

That would be more like the 60's or 70's, mostly in the 70's. We were late in the South.

So you started to school when it was privately owned, and then you saw the state come in and everything became separated.

That's right!

And then you worked until you saw integration come back again.

One of the uniquenesses of Mrs. Mann's story holds the many transitions of racial segregation and integration in the South and of private education--in the academy as she called it--a mixture of both white and black in the rural South. She attended an all-black private college but by the time she graduated and began to teach, the schools were under state control and had been segregated; then she experienced the pains of racial integration during the sixties and seventies:

It was interesting to see how things worked. But it was the funniest thing, out at where we lived, we weren't too much bothered by race. Blacks and whites got along just like, just people. Whenever I moved out from there and came out and saw the difference, I said, 'Well, good gracious.'

I remember one place we lived, there wasn't but one black family around there. It was us. And this white girl was nice, was just like us.

> This was in Kings Mountain when I wasn't quite into high school. And my mother, when they would leave home and couldn't take the children, the children would stay with us.
>
> So you were close . . .
>
> And when we got away from that, saw all this other stuff, it made us wonder.
>
> When did you see that, when you moved to Atlanta?
>
> I started, got a touch of it before then.
>
> When?
>
> Just at the Academy, we knew when not to step over that boundary. . . .

Toni Morrison gives insight into the Africanist character as surrogate and enabler. She points to the ways in which "place as a means of containing the fear of borderlessness and trespass, but also as a means of releasing and exploring the desire for limitless empty frontier:"

> Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less but historical; not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny.(Morrison, 1992, p. 52)

Morrison suggests a need for critical analysis in the manipulation of the Africanist narrative (that is, the story of a black person, the experience of being bound and/or rejected) as a means of meditation--both safe and risky--on one's own humanity. She contends that such analyses will reveal how the representation and appropriation of that

narrative provides opportunities to contemplate limitation, suffering, rebellion, and to speculate on the tensionality found between both fate and destiny. (Morrison, 1992, p. 53)

From this our dialogue continued:

> Oh, I see, it was when you returned as a teacher, and the state had taken it over, that you really felt something had changed there, a feeling toward the people had changed?
>
> The rural schools and rural families were much closer than city families. They depended on each other. . .for survival.
>
> Do you think the school gained when the state took over, or do you feel that they lost something there?
>
> Materially, it was O.K. When we were separate schools we didn't have the facilities, the materials, the books, that we had when we became integrated. Because we had to buy everything. Nothing was given to us. After they got the materials, some of them took advantage of it. Some of them didn't.
>
> So the state, when they took over, they provided the materials. Were your materials the same as the other schools, the white schools?
>
> You shouldn't ask a question like that.
>
> I never, I don't think our equipment has ever been up to par with the whites. They always got a little better than we got, or really more than we got. They didn't have such a hard run-around to get it.
>
> Now, when the schools integrated, they gained that, they gained in that respect?
>
> Some of it, yes.
>
> But, what did they lose?
>
> The opportunity to express themselves, or to be leaders. Because after we integrated we, as teachers were kind of pushed back. We lost some of

> our individuality. **We were almost afraid to say, "teach Negro history."**
>
> The kids were interested, but you didn't know what to do with it. You didn't know whether to teach it, or whether to let it alone, or if kids asked you a question, you had to first think twice before you gave an answer. I know one child asked me one day, "Mrs. Mann, how come you all didn't get as much as we got?" How are you going to answer that question?
>
> How did you?
>
> I just went on talking . . . I just skipped over it and went on about my business.
>
> Silence spoke . . . Taking the posture of a woman of silence and owning the feeling of a "deaf and dumb" being, Mrs. Mann describes her fearful experience. An experience of the possibility of being punished just for using words . . . any words to express her situation.
>
> The only time I've had a problem with the white parents was over a little boy. A man about as tall as that door came in one day about his little boy, bad little fellow, and told me what he was going to do to me. I just looked at him and said, 'Well, here I stand, you're bigger than I am, do what you want to do.' But that child is going to behave in my class. If he doesn't, you take him home with you now." He said, "I will." I said, "thank you."
>
> Did he?
>
> No, the principal wouldn't let him.
>
> Someone looked over and said, 'You've got more nerve than anybody I've ever seen. I said, 'Well that's just the way I felt about it.' That little boy was no more than the rest of them. I've punished the rest of them, I have to punish him.

Another incident where Mrs. Mann demonstrated her courage and resistance in the face of humiliation:

> One guy took us to court. In fact, he took the principal. The principal said, 'Now you're going

> to go with us.' I went with him. The judge looked at him and said, 'Why are you bringing these people over here?' 'They slapped my son.' He said, 'Had it been me, I'd have stomped him.' I said, 'Oh Lord, let's go home.' But you see, they weren't used to it, that's all.
>
> This must have been tough.
>
> Yes, in a way it was tough. I guess it's all the way you look at it. To me, I looked at it as a child was a child, white or black, you do as the rules say. One of those boys said to me one day, 'You know who you're foolin with? I said, 'un-huh,' I'm fooling with one of my students and if you don't like what I do, you'll just have to find somewhere else to go.' He said, 'I'm going to tell my daddy.' I said, 'it's alright, your daddy don't pay my check.' So when it was all over with, all my kids liked me pretty well. It's a matter of being firm.

Even though Mrs. Mann possessed the gifts of intelligence and courage, she was unaware of her own potential of such gifts. It is from testimonies such as these handed through time and through others found in my daily life as daughter of working-class family and in my daily work as teacher of both Euro-American and Afro-American working-class women that I have been deeply moved to act. It is evident that I, too, as Sharon Welch states, "cannot speak for African-American women or offer a definitive interpretation of the moral tradition expressed in their lives and in their writing;"(Welch, 1991, p. 16) I speak, rather as a Euro-American of middling class who recognizes a moral wisdom being played out before me in these lives. This tradition has to do with a persistent holding strength, a strength of holding on when all doors are simultaneously being closed--a strength which precedes all

powerlessness, isolation and bigotry that allows one to pull through the barriers of defeat and violence to our human spirit. It is to this heritage of strength that I am challenged and given hope in the midst of despair to respond with honesty and determination to the immediate dangers and crisis that presently confront each of us. . .dis[ease], war, poverty, and a discrimination which embodies the twin scourges of both sexism and racism. In this same context, Sharon Welch metaphorically describes ACTION as horizon, a certain recognition that we cannot imagine how we will win. It is to this living curriculum of action that the costs of injustice which confines our imagination, puzzles our will and delimits our free choice are revealed, acknowledged and denounced and a celebration of our ability as human beings to transcend ourselves--to actively change our conditions becomes revealed.

A point well made by Welch concerning "the despair of the middle class":

> The temptation to cynicism and despair when problems are seen as intransigent is a temptation that takes a particular form for the middle class. This does not mean that those who are poor or working class are not damaged by or susceptible to despair. That obviously is not the case. But the despair of the affluent, the despair of the middle class has a particular tone: it is a despair cushioned by privilege and grounded in privilege.(Welch, 1991, p. 15)

She continues to clarify "the mask of bad faith" which abandons social justice work for others when one is already the beneficiary of partial social change. This recognition of

"the mask of bad faith" and how the ideological definition of moral action that leads to despair when easy solutions cannot be found seems to be an ever recurring temptation and our greatest shortcoming, our sin of omission. Welch identifies this discouragement:

> . . . of those accustomed to too much power, accustomed to having needs met without negotiation and work, accustomed to having a political and economic system that responds to their needs.(Welch, 1991, p. 15)

Truly it is not easy to recognize this class bias, but it is equally difficult to continue the fight of active resistance as advancing technology continues to distract our interest and sap our energy for other superficial diversions. However, our failure to develop our strength to resist the structures of oppression brings forth our loss of ability to care and to imagine our world differently--to come to envision the not yet.

Of this I am certain, if education is about waking up and as "edge-ucation," preparation for making the edge our center and for stretching to that edge, toward a living curriculum that seeks both justice and compassion, this kind of education has never been more urgently needed. As Matthew Fox describes:

> It is time for education learned to flow once again and to interconnect. . . What we need is a center, not a ladder. A centering from which all education worthy of being called human and therefore 'edge-ucation,' will derive.(Fox, 1979, p. 235)

Our center should be directed toward compassion for it is our only hope for survival--world survival. And, if "edge-ucation" is preparing us for living on the edge, the edge of freedom, liberty and justice, then a common political consciousness is needed for creation of a new structuring. Our focus as educators will then be a constructing of a new sense of soul; our new sense of survival.(Fox, 1979, p. 242)

In Summary

In this re-search entitled "Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations" my purpose has been to rediscover and to reconstruct a meaning for education and therefore a reaffirmation of human life. I have attempted to stretch toward the edge in "edge-ucation" and to make it my centering force. From this founded insight, I steadfastly stand and thus proceed toward authentic existence. As a lifelong teacher of a gendered curriculum, I have formed my perspective from the phenomena of our over-the-edge experiences as women. These experiences compose our landscapes of meaning which are filled with apparent gaps. My concern has been with these gaps and how these recesses have influenced the way we think about what one should know. This one-dimensional world view becomes outlined "by only the purpose that defines their group . . . since only from here can the educator decide what one needs to know in order to contribute carrying out this purpose."(Buber, 1957, p. 98) Certainly, this way of

thinking becomes understandable when one acknowledges the fast pace in which we live--"action rules the hour and one has no time to lose."(Buber, 1957, p. 99) However, it is just here, in the ever-present distractions of daily life, this life attitude prevails toward an ever exclusive curricula designation. This curricula designation possesses one of the most critical dangers of our time: a designated mindset which "holds only in the foreground where things are seen as on a canvass; it will no longer do when one moves into the third dimension and experiences what 'hides behind.'"(Buber, 1957, p. 99) This life attitude with its singular, flat address continues to ignore the background of our lives--the wholeness of our lives lived together; and, what I have referred to as "Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations." Specifically in the gendered curriculum of office science, these dangers manifest themselves in how women identify themselves and how this thinking relates to an inherent moral dilemma within our office curriculum.

This exclusive curricula is primarily characterized by the dominant ideology of an objective reality proven by scientific techniques embodied in the "either/or" competencies of social efficiency. This type of thinking lends itself solely to an ever-increasing division of issues or the falsification of truth; or, the falsification of life itself--reducing thoughts and ways of life into either of these hostile stations. This type of thinking violates our

"response-ability" to come more fully to life. Based on this "deceptive artifice," our curriculum encourages particular norms and imperatives labeled as proper behavior patterns molding and manipulating lives to be lived from narrowly constricted venues. These behavior patterns serve only to stifle our imagination of the world to be perceived while echoes of status quo rationalities weaken our sensibilities to wake up from our hypnotic state.

In a time when many things indicate that we are going through a transitional period, when it seems as if something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born; our only moral and ethical task as educators is to seek out these underlying issues and apparent value shifts which permeate our daily life and work. It is my belief that one of the distinguishing features of this crisis involves our human plurality, an amalgamation of both our spiritual and intellectual worlds with a mixing and blending of cultures. For this and more, our thinking must be redressed and dialogue must occur among us. We must begin to nourish our compassionate consciousness which presumes awareness and consciousness in "amongness-seeing" as oppose to "object-seeing." Our ability to sense our link between interdependence and compassion is critical. (Fox, 1979, p. 237) Therefore, the significance of life lived from our primal ground of relations toward a curriculum characterized

by mutuality, directness, presentness, intensity and wholeness must be acknowledged.

My desire has been to stimulate the imagination of business educators and to mobilize them out of their routinized numbness and technical nearsightedness toward a vision of wholeness found within a transformative curricula of human inclusiveness, a curriculum given within a context of relations; our stories of inter-connectedness through all time and space. As a reality of pure experience, there is no space without time and no time without space; they are interpenetrating. Accordingly, it has been my endeavor to listen receptively to students of our current office curriculum and to women teachers of the past in order to bear forth the present life we have in common and to reveal that which hides behind, the creation of another self--by seeking the illuminating potentials of a third dimension. My attempt has been to make our ordinary stories extraordinary as these persons reflect aloud on their past and present experiences. Spanning from these stories the innermost core of dialogue is revealed as I reflexively listen to my own story in relation to these others.

My intent has been to discover purpose and meaning of other persons through these connections with them, their words, their knowledge and their actions. I have attempted to imagine the real about other human beings in relation to my own as dialogue illuminated the realities of everyday life and

revealed a vision for future curricula. It is here in the act and art of making present that the inmost growth of the self occurs--not in relation to ourselves but in the making present of another self and in the knowledge that one is made present in his/her own self by the other. It is this phenomena which I have called "Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations." This title means a "living reciprocity" which embodies the "manifold aspects" of human plurality. Buber clarifies: "It mirrors and refracts itself in each . . . yet belongs to none. The work of education points to the real unity that is hidden behind the multiplicity of aspects." Here, community becomes the overcoming of our otherness in a living unity; a coming together of persons of "complementary natures but of differing minds."(Buber, 1957, p. 102) The significance of this action lies in the necessity of a genuine educator to respond to the subjective question--who am I?--in reference to others. As David Purpel holds:

> An educator without such a commitment is like the person who is all dressed up with no place to go. An educator, like other professionals, needs tools and skills but must have the wisdom to use these in such a way that courage and passion are inevitable and graceful.(Purpel, 1989, p. 12)

Educators must have language as a tool for which to express their thinking and their situatedness instead of the continued isolation from self which a one-dimensional world view inspires. Some of these dilemmas which we now face emerged from my encounters with women; they were the double

bind, complicity with oppression, the divided self, badges of ability, self-sacrifice, and a flawed humanism enlarged by technology. It appears that more and more women are being required to work in public spaces while many other women are choosing careers. Have we included in our educational discourse experiences which encourage reflective thought that would enable our students to become articulate participants within the living community--to come more fully to life? Can these women not only do their work but also think and therefore speak about the work and world in which they labor? I think not. It appears that our curricula and therefore our culture continues to injure human dignity in order to weaken our ability as persons to respond and to resist the limits of class which continue to impose upon our freedom to be ourselves--a curriculum of human inclusiveness found within Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations.

Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations desires to arouse and to awaken in a woman her be-longing; her end purpose, her authentic existence. It provides a context in which a low-grade schizophrenia, the contrary of rage, can be confronted and overcome. Analogous to the action of a magnet it attracts the telic-focusing powers of Be-ing in a woman. And most importantly, it is only through confirmation of one's own reality that awakens reality in another. Women must first learn to become a friend to the Be-ing in themselves or their centering self before connectedness with other women might

occur. The affirmation of this faith becomes evidenced within our stories and the social power which continues to dis-member and yet at the same moment nourish one half of the human population. My faith lies within the power of a compassionate consciousness to build and to deepen that personhood and thus a living community of solidarity. "A person of passion, a lover of humanity enters into the depth of human existence and insists upon its value and finds God in the exchange of glances, heavy laden with existence."(Elie Wiesel) It if from this faith that I live. I live not out of acquiescence to authority but out of a vision, out of a utopian no place, but of experience of deep anticipation of the not yet--born out of a shared commitment to do justice. However, intimately related to this passion exists the harsh realities of human suffering and human alienation which our commitment to hierarchy and privilege inspire.

As educators our commitments should reach beyond these our current preoccupations. The overarching question of what persons should know in our office science curricula discourse in relation to social justice must reach beyond our common sense assumptions and provide for us our clearest example of how business educators, and educators in general, have co-opted themselves, their beingness to the labor market. Alas, business education teachers as token torturers or covert executioners of the hidden curriculum of femininity and social efficiency become metaphorically manifest in our labor, work

and action. Our language only serves to reinforce this existing sex-segregated division of thought and action. From these sources of power our artificial foundation of curriculum is formed and policies of domination become legitimated and linked to the political character of our classroom. Our moral response to this crisis must begin by our support of the human aspects of our curriculum. Our work may begin with the collective telling of our stories as a foundation for seeing and then challenging patterns of systemic injustice. Working for justice is intrinsic to what it means to be fully engaged with life; fully responsive to the challenge and support of life in community; our own covenant for life.

As educators we must assume responsible leadership by encouraging critical reflection and public consciousness. We must seek compassion and wisdom through our imaginations which demand the mutual respect of partners in moral dialogue. This curriculum requires meditative space so that the process of wisdom and the roots of learned life-lessons may be remembered. A curriculum of human inclusiveness within office education programs must use this curricular space to educate rather than merely to train students about their work. This one-dimensional role the school must reject since it removes curricular knowledge from the sphere of democratic discourse and shared human understandings to application of technical rules and procedures. Educators must step out of "the realm of thinking and planning into the realm of human living."

Only here in the concrete personal life can the truth of a world view establish itself. As Martin Buber elucidates:

> Here in this sphere distinction and decision take place within the world-view. . .
>
> The distinction proceeds from a double question: Upon what does your world view stand? And: what are you undertaking with your world-view? Upon what is stands means, on what manner and what density of personal experience, of living awareness of things and of one's own person . . .
>
> The ground on which a world-view rests, the roots that it has--air-roots or earth roots--decide what nourishing reality will flow to it, decide its reality content, and from this the reliability of its working.
>
> And the second,--what one undertakes with his world-view--means, whether one only fights for and 'carries into effect' one's world-view or also lives and authenticates it as well as one can at any particular time (as well as one can; for there is a seemingly magnificent either/or that is essentially nothing else than flight, evasion). The truth of world-view is not proved in the clouds but in lived life.(Buber, 1957, p. 103)

It is from this "earth-root" ground of existential responsibility that I proceed with my life substance to resist, to struggle and to establish a new and vital reality. Success in this endeavor can only be determined by the genuine conviction of how one believes, the assumed life attitude of persons involved and how success reveals itself in the depth of our future.

As educators, our present experience has been one of massive trivialization. I believe our meaningless and futile situation can be found in the critical consequences of our

worklife, not only in the quality of our well-trained hands but also in the uneducated quality of educators of our time. This has to do with the power of fictitious conviction. What I mean to describe here are those who possess the well-trained skills and knowledge to do their work but do not possess the wisdom to think about the work they do; hence, they become windblown by their "air-roots" only to join and affix themselves ever anew to the current group and popular cliche devoid of reality. The inability to speak about what one does becomes closely connected with an inability to think, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else. A living, receptive communication is no longer possible since reality has become a part and partial of the self-deception itself.

Buber eloquently depicts the relation of opposite concern:

> Opposed to it stands the education that is true to its age and adjusts to it, the education that leads man to a lived connection with his world and enables him to ascend from there to faithfulness, to standing the test, to authenticating, to responsibility, to decision, to realization. (Buber, 1957, p. 105)

Only the educator who can distinguish between appearance and reality, between "seeming realization" and "genuine realization" and who rejects appearances and chooses to grasp reality will lead to genuiness and to truth. Only those educators who understand and acknowledge the serious nature of having a world-view, whatever their world-view may be, should

teach. In today's multicultured world of global communications, educators must choose a truly reliable path to a peaceful coexistence and creative cooperation, and this must start from a rooted self-transcendence--from the genuiness of its ground, transcendence as a hand reached out to those close to us and to the human community and to all living creatures. This is our only hope for survival and against extinction.

Life Lessons Learned

I would like to conclude this study with lessons I have learned while completing this research. Starting from my main thesis concerning the ambiguity of relations or how we think about ourselves in relations to one another, I have become ever more intrigued by our own complicity with oppression found within our own living. This self-undoing has to do with the power of dominated thought and how people continue to deny the means of their own liberation while taking responsibility for acting in ways which reproduce their own powerlessness. This action becomes apparent in our own resistances, no matter how vague in meaning, and may become reproduced at a deeper level by ideological meanings found within our own discourse in how we speak about ourselves in relation to our otherness.

I will explain more clearly through the lives of women whom I have encountered in this work either through research or through real life. Even though a fictional character, Una Golden's life represented the lives of some millions of women at the turn of the century caught in the dilemmas of marriage

or career, husband or office, birth control or motherhood, she epitomizes the ambiguous conditions of the female office worker to be seen as a woman first and as a worker second and her "complicity with oppression." Una's closing remarks were the following:

> 'I will keep my job--if I've had this world of offices wished on to me, at least I'll conquer it, and give my clerks a decent time,' the business woman meditated. 'But just the same--oh, I am a woman, and I do need love. I want Walter, and I want his child, my own baby and his.'(Lewis, 1917, p. 327)

From her life I learned the complexity of "forced choices" and the meaning of the metaphor, "Everywoman as Secretary." As long as there are women, there will be secretaries or otherness. This is not to be mistaken for the echoing voice of a status quo hopelessness but of a reality of existence which brings forward the question: How can women begin to validate themselves and affirm their own humanity?

I contend that it is "only through confirmation of one's own reality awakens that reality in another." The significance of this confirmation cannot be overemphasized. For without some notion of connectedness of common consciousness among women, how can this confirmation ever take place? Without self-confirmation women remain forever separated and set over against one another. It is only through Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations that women can become a friend to the Being in her Self, her centering self.

For Una Golden this center was the production of happiness. And in a vague but undiscouraged way, she kept on inquiring what women in business could do to make human their existence of lovelace routine.

This centering has to do with our acknowledgement of a connectedness which transcends us. Heschel holds, "living details the actions of being" and most essentially from this interpretation "what does it mean to be a living being seeking to relate man to divine living, to a transcendence called the living God."(Heschel, 1963, p. 69) I have gathered from this, our living involves a magnetic tension between the social and the interhuman realm, our personal dealings with one another, a forming of partnership no matter how brief.

It is my opinion that subjectivity is always in flux, and it is within this flux that wholeness is formed. Even though I am caught daily in the human dilemma of contradictions, my contemplative self, my remembering self maintains faith in an interconnected web of relations which cannot be reduced to a mere explanation of social phenomena but of an underlying wholeness of the infinite I Am. The symbol of infinity in constant flux satisfies my need to give visual substance to this energy source. Located on one pole is Being and on the opposite pole is Living. Wholeness is formed by a fruitful sharing between the two. Language intersects this symbol and allows dialogue to progress. Thus, I come to my title, Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations.

No life better illustrates the contradictory split between personal authority of being-in-this world and the responsibility of doing one's duty than Mary Barnett Gilson, personnel manager, teacher and friend of Elton Mayo. From her life I have learned that responsibility must speak out of context of personal authority from one's daily reality.

Because profit-making was the ultimate goal of American business and because male-dominated inner sanctums of business managed the implementation of that goal, most middle-class women along with working-class people faced exclusion in one form or another. Even the white upper middle-class women coopted their identity in order to have any voice at all. It becomes apparent that the reaffirmation of human life through the feminist movement must come from below as well as from above in order to prevent being stranded as Gilson and others were in a sea of corporate culture. Thus, our deprivation becomes both our opportunity and our vocation: to become conscious of the things we have not seen and to make others conscious of these same things.

I learned from Gilson that women are as segmented today as ever. For millions of women do not know where they are going and do not even know where they want to go. This inability to language or see possibilities for difference is closely connected with our inability to think outside the narrow constrictions of our curricula which has educated women to their own demise, their own subordination, their own

undoing. I believe this to be an act of violence--that such a vast potential confused as might be expected in a society which has not yet quite made up it mind that women are really people and that their full development cannot take place in a world full of restrictions and hurdles and obstacles not placed in the paths of men.

Gilson's autobiography is an apology of conscience concerning aspects of her work; her work "being her life" in contrast to how things "seem" to appear in the reality of her everyday experience. This ambiguous human condition becomes increasingly clear around issues of foremen being stripped of their authority to hire and to fire and that of promotions; workers becoming stuck or frozen within the monotony of their work. The gap between Gilson's "good faith" in a system to meliorate industrial unrest and the reality of her lived life was at odds.

Even though her perceptions of Taylorism was centered around relations; around the intimate and the concrete she reflects with an apology of conscience concerning the by-products of enthusiasm to win the war. These feelings surrounded the issues of pressure placed on workers to purchase liberty bonds, calling married women to work, even those with babies and "not only the Americanization of workers but the exigencies of our work (Standard Practice) made us put more and more pressure on our workers to learn English."(Gilson, 1940, p. 165) It was in Gilson's

resistances to long work hours and the dehumanizing effects of industrialization that her own undoing was actualized. It appears we have all become subjects of the system which now precedes us.

From Charlotte Perkins Gilman I have been lead to understand the significance of how any woman might live in a world in which an unrepresentative life could become more visible, more universal, more symbolic and this way make claims to our personal authority, our human worth and our truths. From this point of departure I began to interview my students in the office science curriculum in order to bear forth the voice of the ordinary and the everyday and to pull forward these stories into a greater whole. From these stories, I heard the underlying cultural paradox of self-worth vis-a-vis achievement. This particular value configuration represents the core of our moral crisis and anguish because it reflects our most conspicuous contradiction between our most deeply felt moral conviction--that which affirms the essential dignity of each person--and our most widespread social policy, that which demands that each person must achieve or that we must earn our dignity.(Purpel, 1989, p. 34) In each of these testimonies I heard the familiar story of the "divided self" over the whole of society. These stories poignantly convey the inner feelings and the disconnected language of humans being pulled apart. There is nothing calming about the act of dividing self. It creates terrible pain and suffering because

self is caught in a double bind. This becomes a schizophrenic situation of a sort whereby an individual finds himself trying to obey two conflicting commands at once. This is found primarily when people are trying to earn acceptance or love by doing what is thought respectable in the eyes of the significant other and society. The double bind expresses an impossibility confronting the female student--you must work outside the home and at the same time you are expected to perform your domestic responsibilities.

Even though this was their experience, the lack of language to express their dilemma was apparent. This is a most dehumanizing situation whereby mystification surrounds lives disabling them to come more authentically to the world. And, most importantly their ability to reflect in both written and oral expressions by sharing and expanding on one another's experiences, becomes an almost incredible if not impossible task for most. Such interchanges lead to venues of knowing that foster connections; and without tools for representing their experiences, people remain isolated from the self and from one another.

As a result of these experiences, the significance for curriculum change becomes apparent. However, these changes are difficult in that teachers themselves are in much the same predicament. When suggestions toward a more critical view of our curriculum surfaces and challenges the system of "lovelace routine," powerful resistances occur among teachers as well as

students. These resistances are expressed in a reaction of attitude; an attitude of the inessential relevance of critical inquiry, a waste of time so to speak. This attitude is understandable as technical control continues to keep us distracted from ourselves and from one another; it seems one has no time to lose as expediency becomes the byword of the day. This ordinary attitude is a part of our common sense assumptions which not only support the ideology of dominated thought but also undermines our human dignity as persons.

There seems to be an immediate transfer of "know how" and an experiencing of "success" [self worth] moving from the routine of factory work to the routine of office work. This way of coming to know reproduces itself in our everyday practices. How we speak and think therefore influences and nourishes the resistances and provides barriers to other venues of coming to know within the office curriculum. It is here in our otherness that we discover ourselves as symbols manipulated in the transmission of the dominant culture. Our objective identity lives beyond our control; the image of self, institutionalized by cultural agents, exists alien to our own experience and self-expression; our history becomes forgotten which is an assault on our own thinking, our own selves.

After many years, and only now do I have a better grasp of my mother's attitude and actions toward me. A part of how she thought about me had to do with what it means to be a

woman in a culture where connected histories have been withheld. Understanding the history of the Southern textile trauma in the early part of the century and its connection to the office curriculum better explains the silences and self-sacrifices which interlaced our relations. It is through self-sacrifice that people attempt to deal with shame which concerns our inability to do something which we feel is valued. Shame becomes a circular self-denial which manifests itself within our identity, and to expunge shame or to bring it to closure is a near impossible task. Our ability to produce says, "I'm OK because I can do something which is valued by society." Alas, the paradox becomes "badges of ability" which require the masses to become invisible people. As the yearning to be recognized, to be connected to the greater whole increases, ambition becomes the fueling force toward this yearning. In turn, each one is pitted against one another resulting in an inevitable failure.

Now as I survey the social milieu, reverberations of self-esteem workshops for women stimulate my pulse. The failure is pointed toward the individual woman themselves in their shame. Inspired by these "air-root" curriculums are things they must do; things that they have not accomplished in order to feel OK about themselves, their being-in-this world. She must bear within her own personhood the failure of the whole; thus, our commission becomes a view of the world in a different way. It is this fundamental way of speaking and

therefore thinking about our lives lived together that has and is leading to the destructive forces within our culture.

Our recourse may be found within the gift of dialogue, and it is from this gift of dialogue with Southern women teachers that I have learned the meaning of grasping the essence of the moment, of being present and in the creation of another self within the "between." This other self belongs neither to me nor to the other but to the spirit of the whole found within the "between."

Dialogue provided the means for a moment of wonder as I talked with Mrs. Grady Friday. I am still amazed at the connections that were created by our mutual conversation which spontaneously meshed women's suffrage and slavery in the South. For me, this experience was nothing short of a miracle which sang understandings of life into existence. Our dialogue did provide for a bonding of human spirit which I will always cherish in my remembering.

From my dialogue with Mrs. Emma Mann, a black business education teacher of the 1940's, I learned the spirit of hope, moral wisdom and courage in spite of these our inevitable defeats, a strength which precedes all powerlessness, isolation and bigotry and that allows one to pull through the barriers of defeat and violence to our human spirit.

With Mary Frances Cothran, I learned the significance of class power and how this power turns and shifts within time and place. Our interview experienced difficult interruptions

as trouble abounded in the fragmentation of her family life. As our interview began, she expressed the long held yearning of our older citizens to be recognized in their immense trivialization. This trivialization of which I speak has to do with our ability to prove that our lives as human beings are and have been of some consequential worth. It also speaks to the notion of who will be acknowledged and cared for in our current state of existence. She expressed her feelings of appreciation that I would consider speaking to her; this transformation colors our thinking and in turn our living values as who will be cared about and who will be discarded through our seeming appearances. Her yearning points toward images of glorified youth which make persons "fit" or "unfit" to go out into the world and feel connected in time and place. Surely we as a people in all our humanity can recognize the impact of our own individualized, possessive discourse which feeds into our ever-increasing dilemma. Our nourishing response must be one which concerns our own dignity, our own connected humanity through Dialogues of Being-in-Living Relations.

Thus, my purpose has been explicated: that born in dialogue is a living rejoinder which provides a certain tensionality between the *vitae activa* and the *vitae contemplativa*. It is here the word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates. We find our language

already used, and through language we are joined to previous as well as present speakers. It is here a new voice, a place currently unrecognized, from which to speak about the nature of our lives lived together may be imagined and anticipated as a remote future. This process becomes significant in that it touches upon our moral and spiritual crisis in education and therefore the world in which we live. It is from this living reciprocity, our living answering for one another, that we as human beings must respond to the call. The call to wake up to our living response-ability out of a context of personal authority as experienced within our daily lives. In response to my natural self, my living rejoinder is one of outrage concerning the inhumane treatment of humankind one to another. My personal outrage points toward the concealment of our critical history. As women and as people, our existence becomes mutilated without a "re-membering" of our stories.

In a current video entitled, "The Uprising of '34," the anguish, terror and courage displayed by Southern cotton-mill workers in a crisis within my own community and family deserves to be remembered and understood. Yet sixty years later, this piece of history remains only in whispered voices, if at all. It is to this struggle of humanity against power and to the struggle of memory against forgetting that I respond. (Milan Kundera) The time is now for our pain to be acknowledged and understood so that a new vision of who we are as persons may be embraced.

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APPENDIX A:
CONSENT FORMS

May 24, 1995

Mrs. Mary Frances Cothran
604 Forest Hill Drive
Shelby, NC 28150

Dear Mary Frances,

Thank you so much for allowing me to visit with you in your home on Monday, May 15, 1995. Your warm, southern hospitality was superb along with your willingness to talk with me about your experience as a teacher during the thirties. It is my belief that we must remember our past in order to better understand the present moment in which we live. Our vision for the future depends upon our ability to remember.

Would you please read over the enclosed transcript of our conversation. If there are any corrections you would like to make (i.e. deletions or additions), please do so. The tape recorder or the tape itself was unclear at times; therefore, you may want to fill in gaps. Our dialogue along with others will then be bound for dissertation purposes at the University of NC at Greensboro. Also, if you would prefer your name remain anonymous, I will most definitely honor your request.

Enclosed is a postage paid, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. I will need to make these revisions by June 12, 1995. However, if you believe the transcript represents an accurate description of our conversation you need not return the transcript to me.

Thanks once again for your help. I hope to talk to you again soon. My goal is to eventually publish a book entitled Living on the Edge of Freedom which concerns women's work and education in the South during our century. Your stories would represent a real contribution in my efforts to preserve our experiences as women during our time.

Sincerely,

Frances Crocker-Rhoney

Enclosure

P.S. If you have any questions feel free to call me any time at home (864-6001) or at work (922-6285).

May 24, 1995

Mrs. Emma Mann
214 Reid Street
Belmont, NC 29012

Dear Mrs. Mann,

Thank you so much for allowing me to visit with you in your home on Saturday, May 13, 1995. Your willingness to talk with me about your experience as a teacher in the 1940's through the seventies was extremely interesting, and, as I have previously mentioned, represents a unique and timely story for us today.

Would you please read over the enclosed transcript of our conversation. If there are any corrections you would like to make (i.e. deletions or additions), please do so and return the transcript to me. I will then make these changes and mail you a revised edition of our conversation. Our dialogue along with others will then be bound for dissertation purposes at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Also, if you would like your name to be held in confidence, please let me know.

Enclosed is a postage paid, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. I will need to make these revisions by June 12, 1995. However, if you believe the transcript represents an accurate description of our conversation you need not return the transcript to me.

Thanks once again for your help. I hope to talk to you again after I finish my work at Greensboro. I feel like we were just getting acquainted as our discussion came to a close. My goal is to eventually publish a book entitled Living on the Edge of Freedom which concerns women's work and education in the South during our century. Your stories represent a distinctive voice that I believe should be preserved in order to better understand the present moment in which we live. Our vision for the future depends upon our ability to remember.

Sincerely,

Frances Crocker-Rhoney

Enclosure
P.S. If you should have any questions, feel free to call me any time at home (864-6001) or at work (922-6285).

May 24, 1995

Mrs. Grady Friday
215 Trade Street
Dallas, NC 28034

Dear Mrs. Friday,

Thank you so much for allowing me to visit with you in your home on May 16, 1995. Your willingness to talk with me about your experience as a teacher during the early twenties was extremely exciting. I believe we must remember our past in order to better understand the present moment in which we live. Our vision for the future depends upon our ability to remember.

Would you please read over the enclosed transcript of our conversation. If there are any corrections you would like to make (i.e. deletions or additions), please do so and return the transcript to me. I will then make these changes and mail you a revised edition of our conversation. Our dialogue along with others will then be bound for dissertation purposes at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Also, if you would like your name to be held in confidence, please let me know.

Enclosed is a postage paid, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. I will need to make these revisions by June 12, 1995. Please note that my tape recorder clicked off while you were telling the unforgettable story about the negroes being hanged. I was so enthralled by your story I did not even notice! I have marked the location of the omission.

If you will, I would very much like for you to fill in the transcript. You will notice that your story picks up on the importance of the railroad system during this time. These are two extremely interesting events that i would like to know more about. However, if this is too much trouble for you and you believe the transcript represents an acceptable description of our conversation you need not return the transcript to me for changes.

Thanks once again for your help. I hope to talk to you again after I finish my work at Greensboro. My goal is to eventually publish a book entitled <u>Living on the Edge of Freedom</u> which concerns women's work and education in the South during our century. Your stories would represent a real contribution in my efforts to preserve our experiences as women during our time.

Sincerely,
Frances Crocker-Rhoney

Enclosure

P.S. If you should have any questions, feel free to call me any time at home (864-6001) or at work (922-6285).

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM
Women Students within the Office Technology Program
Gaston College

To participants in this research:

I am a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The subject of my doctoral research is: Women Students Currently Enrolled in the Office Technology Program at Gaston College, Dallas, NC and how they identify themselves. Currently I am interviewing only a few selected women within this program. Later, as time permits, I plan to expand my population to a larger number of Office Technology students.

As a part of this study, you are being asked to participate in an in-depth interview. This interview will focus on your experience before you came to the college, what it is like to be a student in the college, and what it means to you to be back in school--as you reflect on your earlier experience and look ahead to the future. As the interview proceeds, I may ask an occasional question for clarification or for further understanding, but mainly my part will be to listen as you recreate your experience within the structure and focus of the interview: your previous life, the college experience, and the meaning of that college experience.

My goal is to analyze the materials from your interview in order to understand better your experience and that of other women who re-enter schools and colleges for their own various reasons. I am interested in the concrete details of your life story, in what led up to your decision to return to school, in what your everyday experience is like now, and what it means to you. As part of this research, I may also wish to use some of the interview material for presentations to interested groups or for instructional purposes in my teaching.

Each interview will be audiotaped and later transcribed by me and I am committed to confidentiality. In all written materials and oral presentations in which I might use materials from your interview, I will not use your name or names of people close to you. Transcripts will be typed with initials for names, and in final form the interview material will use pseudonyms.

You may at any time withdraw from the interview process. You may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts used, if you notify me at the end of the interview process. If I were to want to use any materials in any way not consistent with what is stated above, I would ask for your additional written consent.

In signing this form, you are also assuring me that you will make no financial claims for the use of the material in you interview.

I,_____have read the above statement and agree to participate as an interviewee under the conditions stated above.

_____
Signature of participant

_____ _____
Signature of interviewer
Date

A P P E N D I X B:
R A W D A T A

Student Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Tell me something about your life before you came to Gaston College and why did you decide to come to college?

B.R.: Before I came to Gaston College I was married and my husband and I worked trade shows together. He was out of town quite a bit and we were both in the trade show union. And I also went up to work shows with him when he worked big shows. So when he didn't have shows; we worked on our real property and we worked on that together. And I lost my husband in an accident about two years ago and my whole life changed after that. I knew I had to go on with my life because I had two small children. I didn't really want to go on but I knew I had to for them. I decided to get myself centered into something else. I wanted to get into something where I could get a better job. A job within this area where I can make decent money.

Interviewer: Now did you do any work immediately outside of high school?

B.R.: Yes, I was assistant manager at a dress shop. I did that for about three years. Then I went on to a textile mill and I worked in the lab and office as a secretary. I stayed there for about eight and one half years. This is when I met my husband--during this time. He was down here visiting his aunt and that is how I met him. We got together and then we moved to Washington, D.C. for a couple years. I didn't really like the area. So we moved back down here. All of my family is down here and that is why I liked it better. He was a real giving person to have done that anyway.

Interviewer: What was the name of the mill where you worked?

B.R.: Ithaca Mill. It is a huge mill in Gastonia.

Interviewer: What type of work did you do in the lab?

B.R.: I typed specifications for knitting machines. They have almost 120 knitting machines. The mechanics bring in the rolls of cloth and we check that cloth and if it is not set up at a certain pattern we have to count the amount of stitches in it. If it doesn't have the right amount we have to keep going back and forth until it is correct so that the cloth will be the right weight and right pattern. I typed those specifications and made certain that they were right. I answered the phone.

Interviewer: Your work was really technical and at the same time you did general office work like greeting people and the answering the telephone and filing--maybe?

B.R.: Right. I did all the filing. Mostly I was not in the lab that much but mostly in the office. Still when someone was out I went in there an helped.
Interviewer: It was probably closely situated--the lab and the office?

B.R.: Yes, they were.

Interviewer: And so after your husband died then you decided to come back to Gaston. Whatever made you choose office technology?
B.R.: Because I had already been involved with it. And, I really did not have that much education in it. And things have changed so much since I was in it because we did not have computers in our office at that time just typewriters. Now they have computers in every one of them and I really had not been exposed to computers that much. My brother helped me get a computer because I had mentioned to him that I would like one. I wanted to learn more about my own computer.

Interviewer: What has it been like since you've come to Gaston?

B.R.: I like Gaston College and all the teachers. I found them very helpful. If you have a problem you can go to them. And, the students are helpful if you did not understand something. We kind of help each other. If you are in the lab, you can ask them a question and they'll help you.

Interviewer: Do you make friends?

B.R.: Yes, you make friends. That is one really good thing. You meet friends and many people are here for the same reason. They want to get their skills updated to land good jobs. There is one thing I've noticed during the daytime that there is many younger students right out of high school. They are not as interested in it now--probably because they are still burnout from high school. That was the same way I was when I got out of high school. But when you go through life and you get out there in the field working you realize how important it is to have that education. Because if you do want to change jobs, and go onto something else you need it. Most companies now want that degree; it is not like it use to be. I have stressed this to my children. Cause I know what it was like to be like you are trapped. And, you are just making enough money to get by. And, you feel like you can't change jobs because you are really afraid to.

Interviewer: Were you afraid to come to Gaston College?

B.R.: Yes. I was afraid at first. I was afraid I would not be able to do it. But after I got in the first quarter and I did fine.

Interviewer: How did you ever get your courage up to come?

B.R.: Well a friend of mine really was a good inspiration to me. She was already enrolled. She just kept bringing me schedules and this helped me.

Interviewer: When you looked at those schedules what about those schedules made you interested?

B.R.: I was interested in the computer and I wanted to learn more about that.

Interviewer: What do you hope to do now?

B.R.: I want to get a two-year degree although I am now in the one year diploma program. I really don't know what my long term goal is right now but I am just enjoying being a student. I really don't want to bog myself down. I don't want to stress myself.

Interviewer: But you do know generally that you want to work in the office.

B.R.: I really want to learn for my own knowledge not just to work for someone else. I may want to run my own business.

Interviewer: So you would like to have your own business?

B.R.: You see I have my own business now--rental property. Hopefully whatever I get I will be happy with what I'm doing.

Interviewer: Since you mentioned small business, we have a small business center here at Gaston. You may take many different kinds of seminars concerning your small business.

B.R.: I really want to get my diploma and then check into something else.

Interviewer: These are seminars that you could take while still enrolled in the diploma program.

Which courses have you enjoyed the most at Gaston?

B.R.: Well I think introduction to business is a good course to take. It lets you know what is going own. That course

really gave me confidence. She was an excellent teacher but she is not easy. She is very demanding and tough tests. You know you don't have much time--50 minutes--for 100 questions. So I thought--well if I can get through her course I can do any of them. This gave me the confidence I could do it.

Actually just coming back to school has given me confidence.

Interviewer: What about any courses that you particularly didn't like?

B.R.: No--not really. So far I haven't really disliked any of the courses.

Interviewer: What does this college experience mean to you?

B.R.: I want the ability to work for someone else in case that I can't make it--enough money for my family. Because if you depend on someone else in life, you don't depend on yourself that is the first thing you have to do--depend on yourself. Because women or men who depend on someone else to make it for them they are going to get let down. If not through divorce, it could be death. You never know. That is why it is important to have your own self established. So that you can make it for your own self in your own way for your kids--especially if you have kids for them also.

Interviewer: Thank you very much B.R. for you time.

Student Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Would you tell me something about your life before you came to Gaston College.

K.D.: Well, when I was in high school my parents didn't steer me to further education. They just kind of steered me to get married, you have children and that is the thing to do--not get more education. So the year that I graduated I got married. And the next year I had a little girl; and then the next year I had a little boy. So, I had an instant family. Not really having a lot of education, there were not a lot of skills that I had to get a good job. And I really didn't take my high school education serious. I went to the mill and I started working in the mill. You have to do what you have to do. I stayed in one mill for five years. I was a knitter; I knitted cloth. This work was kind of laid back, when I first went there. I went to Anvil Knit in Kings Mountain. It was laid back in that they did not really push you. It wasn't like production. You had to get a certain amount but they didn't pressure you if you didn't. It was yarn and cloth and lint flying everywhere. It was real dirty. The people who worked there were mostly older people. They had been there a long time--years and years. They seemed to be happy but they didn't have a lot of education. I think it was just a way of providing for their family. I stayed there five years and at the end of that it started to get more production--more stressful. And my father passed away; so, when he passed away, I left there.

Interviewer: What year K.?

K.D.: This was 1985. I graduated from high school in 1978. When I quit Anvil, I went to another knitting place. It was called Ithaca. There was a lot of young people there but it was really wild. A wild place to work. Because there were a lot of people taking drugs there. And while I was there someone overdosed.

Interviewer: So that must have been an unhappy experience.

K.D.: Well there was a lot freedom there and there was a lot of young people. And people weren't hateful there. But the people that I worked with at Anvil Knit were older and a lot of times you would say good morning to somebody and they would bit your head off. That's what I couldn't understand. I felt burden down working at Anvil. The people were ill, hateful and bitter. But then when I went to Anvil there were younger people and they were high spirited and wild. Not everybody but there were quite a few. I felt more at ease working there. I believe there was more jealously at Anvil Knit.

They saw me as a threat. But at Ithaca I was just another young person. I worked, knitted there for six months on the second shift. There they had a thing called biding where you could move into different jobs. They posted a job, they called the collar department. They make collars. After they come out of a dryer they knitted it, dyed it and finished it. Then we would just roll it up into big rolls. I inspected and shipped the collars out to be separated. And these people would--they would pull the nylon out and mail them back to us. And, then we would send them with the body of cloth to be sewed onto the shirt. I stayed on that job for two years. And then an inspection job came open. So all the while I'm moving up and my pay is moving down. Because the money is in the hard work. So I went from $9 an hour in knitting to $5.65 to the collar department. I was working the second shift in knitting to the first shift in the collar department. I gave up that much money to be with my family. So then a receptionist job came open at Sara Lee which paid 25 more cents an hour; however, I didn't have any experience but I got this job and I did this for a year. I answered the phone and greeted the customers and people coming in. The reason why I left Ithaca was that Sara Lee was closer to my home. This girl left who was the dye house clerk and I bid for her job and got it. And it paid about $2 more. It was purchasing and assigned work to the dye house and finishing. Made sure that each shift had enough work to do. It was more responsibility because of these shifts and that each had enough chemicals to do the work. And if they didn't have enough chemicals and work they would send people home. They would ask, "why don't the people have enough work?" So, it was a lot of responsibility.

Interviewer: What made you decide to come to Gaston?

K.D.: I did this job for two years and my plant shut down. That was really the best job I have ever had as dye house coordinator. This was an office job. It was more like assistant to the manager. I didn't work for the supervisors; I worked directly with management.

Interviewer: And so the plant closed and you decided to come to Gaston and what made you decide on office technology?

K.D.: Even though I had an office job there were things I did not know. I needed to know more about computers because we had a word processor there. I used it a little bit but I really didn't know how to do it and Lotus. And working with dyes and chemicals you had to use a lot of Lotus. Everything it seems is getting more into computers and I just didn't have the skills.

Interviewer: So you really came to upgrade your computer skills.
K.D.: Yes. One thing I think--even if you have a degree you need to keep growing because the world is growing. And it is going to leave you behind. Even if it is just another word processing or another skill in Lotus or Database or it really doesn't have to be computers just any kind of skill that will help you to grow. Technology just keeps changing. You must move with it or get left behind.

Interviewer: Were you frightened about coming to school?

K.D.: I was scared. Cause when I was in high school I didn't take it serious.

Interviewer: So, when you came to Gaston what was it like and what is it like now?

K.D.: I think the courses have helped me a lot. It relates to business and being professional. From little things to big things I really think it has helped me a lot. Just communicating, the use of language and dressing properly. Gaston College has helped me to grow into what I need to be for a job. It has helped to mold me. Where a manager could take me and show me this and show me that but Gaston College has helped me mold for a job that I need.

Interviewer: So you felt like training on the job has been only for a specific task whereas at Gaston College you are really being molded or many more things than one particular given task that is needed.

K.D.: Yes.

Interviewer: After you graduate from Gaston College and you are in Administrative Office--what do you thing all of this is going to mean to you once you get back out there.

K.D.: I am going to be more qualified and it has made me a better person.

Interviewer: What about the teachers?

K.D.: One class I felt cheated out of was records management. I took it and made and "A" in it but I felt that it was rushed through. There was not enough explaining, but she was there on the spur of the moment. The class had been divided because it was so huge.

Interviewer: Were there any class that you felt was particularly helpful and if so why?

K.D.: I think my word processing course, database and spreadsheet. Communications was also helpful to learn how to write a letter and fold and envelope correctly.

Interviewer: Are these the things that make you different from other people in the crowd.

K.D.: Yes, people need to know how to express themselves if they are going to get a degree.

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much, K.

Student Interview Transcript

Interviewer: S. if you will try and think back to when you first got out of high school and what year was that?

S.D.: Well I didn't actually graduate from high school because of a car accident. I was in the ninth grade when it happened. So I didn't get to graduate.

Interviewer: Oh, so you were in the ninth grade when this accident occurred.

S.D.: It was in 1968. So I didn't go back to school until the late seventies. But, I didn't finish.

Interviewer: So, you must have completed the GED.

S.D.: Right.

Interviewer: Did you complete your GED here at Gaston.

S.D.: Right.

When I lost my job where I was working I knew I had to get better job training. So I came out here and I had from January to March to get my GED. I had everything done except my grades were not back from one; but I had done well enough so they went ahead and enroll me. That was in 1991.

Interviewer: So, you were in the ninth grade when you were in this car accident. What did you do between ninth grade 1968 and the GED.

S.D.: For seven years I kept children in my home. And then I went to work for Antiques and I worked there for almost eight years. They made reproduced things--such as Santa Claus figurines and things like that.

Interviewer: When did you get married in all of this?

S.D.: I got married in 1976. And I wasn't working. He is mostly the reason that I returned; he encouraged me. My mother never encouraged me again. She always made me stay right with her. So when I came out here the first time it was because my sister came home from Texas and insisted. As soon as she went back, mama pulled me out. But he is the one that thought I could do anything.
Interviewer: And so you were married in 1976. So for a long time you stayed home with your mother.

S.D.: Yes, and did nothing. This was terrible but for a long time after the accident I didn't like myself. It took awhile to accept myself because you must like yourself first before anyone else can. Interviewer: How did you learn to do that?

S.D. It just gradually took time and you just have to learn to accept yourself and your limitations.

Interviewer: Did anyone help you do that? Or did you do that on your own?

S.D.: Well I think a lot of it was myself because on the inside I knew where I was, who I was. And then, when I married B.--see I knew him before I got hurt. And then after we got married he encouraged me. You got to know your limitations.

I came to Gaston College before B. and I got married. I didn't finish with my degree. I almost finished but transportation was a real problem. I had met this guy out here that was going through the GED and he started bringing me and taking me home. But, that became a little uncomfortable.

Interviewer: And then you married B. in 1976.

S.D.: I went to work for Antiques. I worked for them two years and then kept children in the home. Before that I read alot. I would read almost all night and sleep all day.

Interviewer: What did you read?

S.D.: Anything, mysteries mostly.

Interviewer: Since you have come to Gaston College, what has it been like?

S.D.: I love it. I was scared to death when I first came but I found most of the students to be very nice. You don't usually find any who is not. All the teachers are extremely helpful and encouraging. I guess I would have quit the first quarter if it had not been for Mrs. Domenico. And, I got my job--and that is on the count of you. Because you had us go over to the campus switchboard and this gave me the experience; plus Dr. Scott offered me a part time job with the college. So that is really on the count of you. And now I fill in for them. Like tomorrow I'm going to come in at eight and work so they can take a break and today I'm going to second shift.

Interviewer: So your degree will be in Administrative Office Technology and Medical. You will have two degrees. Now what do you hope to do with that when you graduate?

S.D.: I would really like to stay at the college in some kind of position. That is what I would love to do because I like everyone out here. They have suggested that I call Southern Bell. But I would really like to stay out here in some kind of position. I like the switchboard and I like the tower. I just like the college.

Interviewer: That is great and good to hear.

What course or courses have been most helpful or on the other hand which might have been the least helpful?

S.D.: I have enjoyed all my classes. And each one of them has given me something. I really like WordPerfect a lot because you can do so much with it. I've enjoyed all my classes.

The one I have had the most trouble with is medical terminology. I really had to struggle with that one. But that is because spelling is not my greatest subject.

Interviewer: You feel like the Community College and the office technology program has given you hope.

S.D.: Yes, most definitely. And it has given me more self esteem and I feel like I can do more. It was the best thing I ever done for myself. I was talking to my brother the other day on the telephone and he told me that he wished that he could do it.
I told him he could if he wanted to do it.

Interviewer: You're living proof of that--people can do whatever they decide to do within themselves. So you have had to do a lot of thinking about who you are.

S.D.: When something like this happens it changes your whole life. So you have to really reconstruct your whole life. Things that you use to do you don't do anymore, but you have to compensate.

Interviewer: Don't you think or do you see a difference in the students who come straight out of high school to Gaston College as oppose to someone like you?

S.D.: It is easier for them. I really do think so because we are out of the habit of studying and doing things. And, it takes a while to get back into things. I would still recommend it to anyone.

But as far as commitment the older student is at an advantage. There was a very young girl in my medical terminology class who was having a difficult time and instead of buckling down she just changed her major.

Interviewer: Thank you S. I appreciate your time.

Student Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Could you tell me about your life before you came to the community college? What you were doing--and you can go back as far as you want to on this. You can go back to your high school days and come forward. After you graduated from high school what you did--and how much time lapse there was before you came to college.

C.H.: I got married out of high school. And I worked at Belmont Heritage in different positions--production controller, section person which in textiles means you have the floor. I quit there the summer before Jason started kindergarten because I wanted to be active in the school. Take him to school; pick him up, and do all the things that needed to be done while he was in school. And then that and volunteer work was all I did until up until my husband died. After that I spent all my time with Jason. And, I decided when he got older and getting social I would need a life of my own. Because he was going to be out of there soon. And this is when I decided to come back to Gaston.

Interviewer: O.K., so you graduated from high school when?

C.H.: In 1976

Interviewer: And you were married in--

C.H.: In 1976.

Interviewer: How long were you married before your husband was killed?

C.H.: Eleven years.

Interviewer: So that was about what 1987. And Jason was about how old then?

C.H.: Jason was born in 1978. He was eight.

Interviewer: And then you started Gaston when?

C.H.: In 1991. So the majority of my adult life has been homemaker, mother and a volunteer.

Interviewer: Now, let's go back to that production controller. Just what did you do there?

C.H.: Well I had to work with the management and the employees. I had to set up the schedule. And meet the schedule as to when how long we would have to run something

and get it out on time. When the machines would have to be changed over and things like that. Basically I met production schedules--to make certain the shipments got out on time.

Interviewer: So you were like a middle man between employees and management. Now how did you get that job?

C.H.: I started out--I worked part time in high school. I started out as a winder. I went from a winder to a packer to shipping clerk to production controller to section person to technician--I just did everything and steadily went up. I trained new plant managers when they came in.

Interviewer: So you were there while you were in high school?

C.H.: Yes, I was at Belmont Heritage but they are no longer there. Parnell bought it out.

Interviewer: What do they make?

C.H.: They make yarn.

Interviewer: What is it like to be a student at Gaston College?

C.H.: Well, I love it. I have always said that. Cause I like just getting out--I stayed home so long. I have made many friends. I have more of a social life now than I use to.

Interviewer: You mean with people here at the college?

C.H.: Well not going out socializing but we do things here.

But I'm more active and have much more to do.

Interviewer: So you really feel like that coming to a community college helped you get out of the house and find a community within the college.

C.H.: Right. People look at me crazy when I say--if I didn't have to go to work I would just come here all the time until I ran out of things to take.

Interviewer: So you just like being a student.

C.H.: Well I like learning.

Interviewer: Well what about the teachers?

C.H.: I know this sounds strange but I have only had one instructor that I wasn't really crazy about. But other than that I like all my instructors.

Interviewer: What do you think this experience will mean to you later on? Once you have obtained your degree.

C.H.: I plan to enroll in the paralegal program.

Interviewer: So what is this going to mean to you?

C.H.: The reason I chose paralegal--I always wanted to be a lawyer. But that didn't work out and unless they build a law school nearby it is not likely to work out anytime in the near future. And that is as close to it as I am going to get. I love law. That is the reason my dad got to upset when I got married; he wanted me to go to law school. He said, "C. the way you love to argue; you'd be a perfect attorney."

Interviewer: That's good he was able to talk to you about that and could see that potential in you and felt that it was O.K. for you to be a lawyer.

C.H.: Oh, my father always thought I could do anything I wanted to do.

Interviewer: Good. So what you really hope to do after this is to get more involved in public, political life as a paralegal.

C.H.: Yes, my sister tells all her friends--they ask her if I'm going to become a lawyer? She says well my prediction is that when Jason goes off to college--C. will go off with him. She will eventually go; however, I don't foresee that happening. I don't see how I could possibly pay for both of us to go to college. But Jason would just love for me to go off to college with him!(laughter)

Interviewer: What grade is he in now?

C.H.: The eighth.

Interviewer: What does Jason want to do?

C.H.: It changes year to year. But the last goal he had was a chemical engineer. But he still really does not know what he wants.

Interviewer: Well you might do that. I mean who knows.

What if Gaston College had not been here?

C.H.: Well I originally was going to CPCC. But I did not want to drive to Charlotte. So I came to Gaston to take a year's worth of classes and then transfer to CPCC and finish up in the paralegal program. But after I got here--it did not work out that way. I found out their program was failing. So then I decided to go to Queens College who has their own individual paralegal program. But nothing would transfer in and I did not want to lose a years worth of work and credit. So I decided to stay here and finish up the legal office and then go to Queens. However, how Gaston is getting the paralegal program so I have been here ever since.
Interviewer: It is good we are going to get that here.

C.H.: But I love Gaston, I love the instructors. I like school and I have always liked school. I would be a career student if I could afford it. But I really believe this experience is going to make me more competitive in the work force.

Interviewer: Yes, absolutely.

C.H.: And today I need all the help I can get.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for your time CH.

Student Interview Transcript

Interviewer: M. would you please tell me something about your life before you came to Gaston College.

MC: I graduated in 1982 from Ashbrook High School. Right after high school I did -- I had a job during high school part time. And then once I graduated from high school I got a job at Moore's Building Supply. This is where I decided to come to Gaston. Well I had intention to become a legal secretary but because I had a child at a young age and I was trying to work and everything--then I got married. This interfered with my life of coming to school. Anyway I did take up basically some courses on legal secretary but after a couple years at Moore's Building Supply I became office manager. I became office manager after two years as part time cashier at Moore's Building Supply. I continued to be office manager and during that time that I was there as office manager we became automated. We were going to transfer manual operations to computer operations. So I came back to Gaston in 1987 to take up computer fundamentals and basic programming. This I thought would enable me on the job to be more prepared for a situation. So after nine and one half years with Moore's; they went out of business. So I worked to December of 1991 with them to help them clear out the assets and the paper work. So basically after that I decided to look for another job right after that but I found that the job market was really hard. It was really a bad time for anybody to be looking for a job. This is when I decided to come back to school. I had a lot of background and many job interviews I went on said I was well qualified but most of them wanted WordPerfect or Lotus 123 so I decided to come back to school.

Interviewer: So you really reentered to retrain.

M.C.: Yes, I reentered to retrain.

Interviewer: Well now that you are here, could you tell me what student life is like here?

M.C.: Basically I have told students who I have come in contact with that to me going to school now is different than after high school because I have a different attitude about life. I know more about life now--more mature attitude and know what to expect out of life. And I feel better about myself now coming back as a student. Because I feel like I am out to accomplish a goal. I feel like I am really accomplishing a goal to upgrade my skills to be a better employee. Not that I really wasn't a good employee before because no one can stay on a job nine and one half years unless the company really appreciates the quality of your work. So I feel like I am increasing my skills and bettering

myself as a person in the process. I feel real good about coming to school. I have told my mother many a time that I feel really good about going to school. I know I need a job and I know I will find a job because I have faith in God that he will provide a job for me. I feel like right now the time for me to go back to get the skills that I need to upgrade my previous experience. But as far as students--I have found they communicate very well at Gaston College. The students can really relate to you and I can sort of help them through a problem. Especially like a class in records management for example that class was in depth and sometimes you must work your way through it yourself.

Interviewer: So you feel there is a connectedness between students.

M.C: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you see a difference between someone like yourself who has been out of school, who has worked and returned to school and some of the students here who are fresh out of high school?

M.C.: There is a big difference. My one particular class was Communications I and that class I think there was only maybe two or three of us that were not fresh out of high school. Because you could tell the difference between attitude in wanting to learn and attitude wanting to gain skills and my attitude. There is a big difference.

Interviewer: There must be difference in readiness to hear, too.

M.C.: That is true. Because their attitude was well "if I do, I do, if I don't, I don't." The older student has a totally different attitude. They are here to gain and upgrade themselves.
Interviewer: Now, what about teachers here at Gaston?

M.C.: I feel like most of the teachers that I have come in contact with most of them are out to help the student. They seem to know that is what they are here for. But also I feel like instructors have to have relationship as to where they can sort of associate a students life but not interfere. They sort of have a connection there to be able to communicate. I feel like the instructors here get along pretty well with the students.

Interviewer: You seem to think the instructors add that personal touch.

M.C. Yes. I think that is very important. We are taught to learn but yet we come to be comfortable to learn. I think the instructors for the most part make that possible.

Interviewer: Well, have you completely dropped the idea of becoming a legal secretary?

M.C.: At one time I would have like to have become a legal secretary but I hate shorthand. So I know I have to look at other alternatives. I am looking more toward the general office--general manager.

Interviewer: So you think the world of work helped you better see yourself as far as what you really wanted to do then?

M.C: Yes.

Interviewer: After you graduate what do you think this experience is going to mean to you?

M.C.: I feel like I will have accomplished exactly what I intended to accomplish. You know you go out into the job market and this is my experience. And with my experience, as office manager previously I found that either they tell me I have too much experience for the type of position or I don't have enough experience for another position. So I have been stuck in the middle. Do you know what I mean? I am looking to gain experience that I need to go on any job whether just a basic entry job or a higher level. But I know for myself that whatever job that I am put on I can accomplish it. Because I have certain goals in my own mind that I feel like that I am accomplishing a job that I have previously had experience.

Interviewer: What I think I hear you saying is that Gaston College what it will mean to you and what it does mean to you today it has helped you acquire that extra self confidence by upgrading your skills to meet those goals.

M.C.: But you know for most schools Gaston College is a good school to attend. It is all in what you want out of it.

Interviewer: And, what do you mean by a good school?

M.C.: As far as the technology of the school, it is good and the instructors are good. I am pleased with the school and know of no bad thoughts about the school. People seem to help in a way that they care. This makes a pleasant school.

Interviewer: Thank you M.C. for your time.

MRS. GRADY FRIDAY
215 Trade Street
Dallas, NC

May 16, 1995

Teaching was about the only thing that women did outside the home then.

In 1920, '21, when you taught?

Uh-huh, that's right. Oh, they were a clerk in a store, maybe, just something of that sort. But in the business world you didn't see many women at all.

It was mostly men out there...

Yes, that was a man's world.

And so, really what I have researched and tried to investigate is how that all came to be... Since it was a man's world, why did it change?

Well, I don't think I can answer that. It was gradual. Because women, after school teaching, first there were a lot of men teachers, but when the. . . The schools were small, there might be a man that would have the whole school. I remember, my grandfather lived on a farm and they had just a country school there...

Dallas?

No, it was in South Carolina. They had a school, a short term in the winter and a short term in the summer. And they had one teacher, and often it was a man and he taught everything. There wasn't any . . . I've been in that school when I was a child. It was just one big room and everybody was in that. . . They just went from one thing to the other.

So, that's where you went to school in South Carolina?

Well, I didn't go **there**, the school teacher usually stayed at my grandparents' home. And one of my aunts taught over there for a while. I guess that's why I went into the school. I was just a visitor, seeing what the school was like.

What year did you start to school?

I started to school about 1906.

And what was school like in 1906 when you started? Was it one room?
Not the school I went to. It was divided into grades. There might have been two grades in my first room, I'm not sure. But, a lot of times, they would have two grades together. I believe they had the Primer in the first, then the second and third, the fourth and fifth. And after about that time, they were really down to one in each room.

Now, who was your first grade teacher? Was it a man or woman?

A woman, but when I started school, they had teachers for about every two grades. No teacher had over two grades. They had high school and everything all in one building. You kept going until you got through.

What did you do for lunch?

We went home for lunch. We had long enough time. If they couldn't go home, they brought lunch with them.

Like a box lunch?

Yes.

What was the curriculum like? You took reading? writing? math? What did you study?

Well, that was just about it. Then, when we got on up in the grades we had a superintendent of our school. Superintendents taught then. And he was quite a mathematician. He taught us. In South Carolina, you weren't to teach geometry in high school.

Why was that?

I don't know. But he took us into plane and solid geometry. Because he loved to do it and he had people who would follow him. We went right on up into that.

And so, you graduated from what school?

Blacksburg High School.

And you went all the way from the Primer through high school in one school.

One school.

And how many people were in your graduating class? Was it a small group, or . . .

There were about 20 or 25.

Did you go straight to college?

I went to Winthrop.

And studied music?

Yes. My major was music.

So, you graduated from Winthrop in what year?

1920.

So you know all about the flappers.

Honey, when I was at Winthrop, you weren't much of a flapper because they were so strict. We wore uniforms, and you didn't dare. . . You had to buy a uniform coat, that was a dress code. And we all said when we got out of Winthrop, never again, not anything else navy. . . The first suit I bought was navy.

Now, your hair-do, did they allow you to bob your hair? or did you wear it long?

It was long. I didn't cut my hair for a long time.

That was an issue then, bobbing your hair. That was really liberated.

Oh, yes. I don't think my parents were. . . mine was not cut until I was, oh, I don't know, not until after I got out of college. And that would have been so much help to have had it cut.

You had to braid it?

Oh, yes, roll it or do something. I did something with it every day.

And then when you graduated from college, did you go right into teaching?

I went right to teaching. I was prepared to teach piano. They gave me a contract that just said "town in lower South Carolina," and I was to have. . . they guaranteed me 20 students at $3 a month each, I believe that was right. The students were supposed to pay me. When I got there, they were short a teacher. Somebody didn't show up, so they asked me if I would take, I think it was maybe two grades, and if I

wanted to teach piano, I could do it after school. So I did.

Well now, what kind of money did teachers make then?

$90 a month. And when that first year was over, the county was broke. It was a hard time financially.

This was in the 1920s?

This was 1921. They couldn't pay us for 2 months. We left school, left the town we were in, and where we were boarding, and it didn't pay our board.

So you boarded down there. . .

Oh yes, I lived in the house that one of my uncle's fraternity brother's at Furman University.

My goodness, so you lived there in the house with other women -- teachers, or . . .

No, well, there was one other teacher. And I lived with this couple. They had no children.

Was that in Lowell, South Carolina?

No, that was in Smoke, South Carolina, down below Orangeburg.

Oh, I see. Now, how did you find out about that opening?

I really don't know how or where I learned about that. I know, I had a letter from one of the trustees asking me about coming there to teach piano.

Teachers were scare then.

That's right. I think it was one of the trustees' wives that fanangled the whole thing.

They were looking for college-graduated women who were willing to teach.

I received this letter from him, and I thought, "Well, that sounds pretty good," and I just took it.

So your parents' home was in Blacksburg, and what did your dad do?

He was postmaster. He was postmaster in Blacksburg for years.

Now, did your mother work, or did she stay home?

She stayed home. She was reared by her grandmother. Her grandmother -- Winthrop opened and she was supposed to go to Winthrop, and her grandmother died. She didn't get to go.

So she wanted **you** to go.

Yes.

So, Winthrop has been in existence a long time if she was thinking about going there.

That's right, that was about the time it opened.

So that was 1800 and something. 1850?

They were married in 1898. I have forgotten what year Winthrop was opened, but it was in the 1890s.

And so, when you first started teaching, how many students did you teach and what grade . . .

I taught, I believe it was fourth and fifth combination.

How many years did you do that?

I didn't stay there but one year because I didn't want to do that, and I came here to do the same thing.

So you thought you were tired, and you really didn't like it.

I really didn't care about the grade work, itself. Because I hadn't prepared for that.

So they had you teaching elementary school and you were prepared for something else, and that didn't suit you.

That's right.

So you came here hoping that . . .

Well, I went to another place in South Carolina the next year and taught piano full time, and was paid just like the other teachers.
Now was that in school? They had piano in the school?

Yes, I taught at the school.

So, did the students just come to you during the regular class periods?

They were scheduled during times that they could be out of class, and they just paid me a regular salary just like they paid the other teachers.

And then you taught there. . .

I taught there one year. They wanted me to come back, but for some reason I didn't want to go. Then I came here to Dallas. I taught piano here.

In the schools?

Yes, in the schools. I had a studio or whatever you want to call it. It was at the high school.

Dallas High School?

Well, it was just, I don't know, it was like Blacksburg. It was all the grades. One building had all the grades in it. Then there was another building for the high school.

Wonder what year that was, that you came . . .

That was, now, let me see, it was 1922. I came here in '22.

And how long did you teach in Dallas?

I taught here, I guess it was 3 years, but I got into grade work here. A teacher left and the superintendent, principal he was, asked me if I wouldn't take that and I could teach piano if I wanted to, along with it. And I took it, but I wouldn't be guaranteed anything, that would be extra. So I did. I taught fifth grade, and then I finally, it just ended that I was teaching fifth grade. And then later, after a good many years, we changed principals, and he asked me to do school music through the whole school. So I did that for I don't know how many years, but it was quite a few.

And so in 1929 you were here in Dallas?

1929? No.

When did you get married?

We were married in 1925, and left Winnsboro, and I didn't teach any more until, oh, we came back here. . . it was about 9 years later, I guess. I had my family all that time and I didn't work when they were little. I came back here and we _____ in this house, I guess. One of the fifth grade teachers left, and the man who owned the drug store down here called the trustee and told him that Mrs. Friday was here. Why didn't he put her back over there? So I went back to

teaching. My children were all in school. I went back to fifth grade, and then went to high school. The principal was here one day, we were sitting out in the yard. He said, "I'm going to put Latin back in the high school if I have to teach it myself. And I just opened my big mouth and said, "Well, I had four years of Latin in high school. And when I got over to high school I was scheduled to teach Latin. I hadn't looked at a Latin book since I was in high school.

And you were in high school in 1910, maybe?

Oh, yes, I was in high school around 1913, '14.

And what grade did your high school go through?

My high school went through the eleventh grade.

And then you went through four years of college. That was a lot of education for a female during that time.

That's right. It was about all they got then.

And not many got that much. You were one of the few.

At Winthrop, I know they had one-year and two-year teacher courses. You could get a certificate and start teaching.

And you went into music.

Yes.

So, you got the teacher's certificate, but you did more.

Well, I didn't have a teaching certificate, except for music. And when he asked me to take a grade when this teacher left, he said, "How about going to summer school and get a certificate to teach this grade?" And I did. I went up to Asheville.

Asheville. That was . . .

Asheville Normal School.

I've read about the Normal School.

I went there to summer school and got enough certificate so I could teach a grade. Then I went into the fifth grade until later, this same principal put me into Latin. He gave me music and Latin.

And how long did you teach here, then?

I taught here about . . . I taught 3 years before I was married. Then I stayed out about 9 years, and came back and taught the fifth and sixth. I retired in '66.

It's wonderful that you taught that many years.

I couldn't do it now.

Oh, I know what you mean, to go back.

When I sit here, and think of what goes on in schools now, I couldn't take it. School now isn't what it was then.

What do you think has changed the most?

Discipline is the big thing. And that comes from home.

Yes, the homes have changed, and you think it has changed the schools?

Maybe I, I'm not to say it, because I went to work, but a lot of times, it's the mother being out of the home.

Mothers are all having to work now.

That's right.

But I always had somebody, my children were taken care of. Either my mother was here, or I had somebody who was here to take care of my children.

So you really think it is discipline that has changed the schools.

I really do. Discipline causes all the problems at home. When they are not disciplined at home, they have no respect for discipline anywhere else. It carries over.

Do you feel like, as you taught, it got harder and harder because of that?

Well, we never had discipline problems when I was teaching. Well, an occasional one, or maybe one . . .

It was rare.

Yes. I had problem children, of course. Everybody . . . you have that many and I had some. But so far as that being a general thing, you give them something to do and they refuse to do it.

You gave them something to do and they did it. . .

Yes, they **used** to do it.

Now, did most of your students, when you first started teaching, did they, it was a community school, and they came to that school and, who got to come to school? Did everybody get to come to school?

It was required.

When did that start?

I don't know, but it was after I started teaching, it came into existence. Yes, about that time. Then they were required to go until they were 14, I believe it was. I believe they raised it to 16. But when they did that, there were those who would come to the day they were that age and then drop out. At the time I was teaching here, we had active PTAs. And we had parents who stood behind us with everything that we did. You knew you'd get support from home. But you know, they don't get that now.

So teachers are on their own.

Oh, yes, that's right. And parents will tell them, "Well, you don't have to do what that teacher tells you."

Education isn't valued as much as it used to be.

No, that's right. It's too bad. And that's the element that we're getting all our problems from.

The values have shifted.

Was it in Charlotte that they have a curfew? Last night was the first night, I think, that anybody fifteen or under could not be seen on the streets after 11:00 pm or they would be picked up and taken home.

It's hard to imagine the youth on the streets after 11:00.

Well, I can think of my own brothers. Why, they wouldn't have dared be out, and my boys wouldn't have been unless we knew where they were.

And why would they want to be out after 11:00 on the streets, anyway?

Well, they don't have any business. There's nothing good for them out there.

Right. And that has certainly changed. That whole notion of where to be and when to be there, and ... It seems like it's turned up-side-down.

Well, I think so too. I don't know what it is, low morals, or anything goes anymore.

But you've lived the whole century. I mean, you have been in school, and you have been teaching. So here we are at the turn of the century...

And if I make it to the turn of this century, it would be great!

It would be wonderful! Because you can talk about all the history that we've lost. I mean, that I can only read about, that you've lived through. I just think you probably know how much education used to mean to people, even as a student, and as a teacher, how school was valued then. Everybody didn't get to go to school, for what I read.

No, now I had a grandfather who was very...it was one of his plans for all of his children to go to college. When my father and his older brother came along, Clemson College was just opening. He told them, "You boys can go to Clemson, or we can buy this farm down here (it was his father's farm, his father had died). My father wanted to go to school, but the other brother wanted the farm. The farm won out, they didn't go. The other three children all went to college. Now that was two generations back from me. He was, that was one of his beliefs, that you should get all the education that you could.

That was during the 19th century that they were going to college. The youngest one in that family graduated in 1914. _____ graduated in 1909. I can hear her now, singing her songs of the class of 1909. She went to Limestone. And he went to Furman University.

Tell me about the 20s. That's when you were teaching. I'm interested in the 20s because there was a lot going on then as far as women changing roles. You were were talking about the mothers going to work, and I think the rumblings of that was voting... voting was an issue.

I voted the first time women got to vote.

Oh, how exciting!

Was that '20 or '21?

Probably '21, I think it was in August of '21.

I know it was just before I was going to teach. I don't know if it was my first year or second year.

Well, that was a high time for women. They were really eager in thinking that they were going to be more active in the public sector. They were teaching and becoming clerical workers, but then at the same time, there was a backlash there, because women were leaving the home. And the men didn't think the men ought to have the vote.

They didn't?

Oh, no.

Did most of them feel that way?

Well, I don't know whether they did or not, but I know there was some feeling among men. I think one thing was, a lot of things happened around the election polls, where there were just men. They didn't want the women to be _____. That might have been the excuse. I don't know whether it was the reason.

They thought it was inappropriate for women to be there?
That's right. I'll tell you something I saw once. We always had horses at our house, and down behind the barn was a blacksmith shop. One morning our doctor called my father and said there were two black men taken out of the jail and hanged down there last night. The minute that Papa heard it, he put the telephone down and started to go down to the blacksmith's shop.

Oh, I know, we had a friend from Dallas who was visiting us. She was coming home and my husband said, "Wouldn't you like to go back with Miss Helen and visit with your parents and then I'll come up and pick you up." I said, "Yes, I would." So we came on up, we slept on the train that night. We got on in the afternoon, spent the night, and got up to Jacksonville the next morning. Then got on home that day sometime.

Now, I'm going to talk just a little bit more about the flappers because I've read about, but I don't understand what . . .
I don't know whether I do or not either. Who were those people?

They were just young girls of the 20s. . .

Young -- in their teens?

Yes. Young girls, in their 20s, I would say, mostly.

And what were they doing, and why did they call them flappers?

I have no idea.

Ok, . . .

It was just something, for some reason, they were called flappers. And I don't know why.

You remember Amelia Earhart?

Oh, yes.

She was . . .

I remember very well. . . she took her trip.

She started women wearing slacks for the first time.

Yes. . .

That was a good time to live. I mean, to be young, to be living then, because so many things were happening.

Well, now, when Amelia Earhart came along, I had a family.

EMMA MANN'S HOME
214 Reid Street
Belmont, NC 29012

Saturday, May 12, 1995

This is an interview with Emma Mann. We're going to talk about what it was like for her to teach in the 1940s until she retired or stopped teaching.

You said you first taught in 1941. Was that in Belmont?

No, 1941, my first year teaching was at Unity High, Statesville, NC.

And how old were you then?

I was 23.

What were the requirements then to become a teacher? Did you need to go to college?

I went to fours years of college at Morris Brown College, Atlanta, Georgia.

And how did you get to Atlanta, Georgia? Are you from Georgia?

No, my native home was out here at Kings Mountain. I had a brother down in Millins, Georgia. He persuaded me to go to Morris Brown College. So I went down there, and that's where I graduated. I took two years business and then went back and finished up my college. I was down there for five years.

So you were in Atlanta for five years. Did you go to school in Kings Mountain?

Yes.

I guess that was the 30s?

I graduated from high school in 1934, at Lincoln Academy. It was a private school run by the American Missionary Association. When they gave it up the state took it over.

So you graduated before public school really ...

That's right. I went to high school and college in private schools.

Now, was Lincoln Academy a private black college or was it integrated? . . . Well, now I have read about that; I wish my

grandmother were alive because she also went to a school before there was public school. Can you tell me about the Academy? What was that like? How many people were in your class?

I think in my class there were 24 who graduated, 16 girls and 8 boys.

So it seemed to be more girls going to school then.

At that time, yes there were.

Because the men may have been working, or wonder why that was?

Some of them were working and some of them just quit.

It seemed like the girls found out an opportunity they hadn't had before. So they were more enthusiastic.

That's right. It was a boarding school.

So you lived there.

I stayed there for two years, then I moved back home with my parents. When I graduated, I was living at home in the community there.

Now what was it like, did you go on a train, how did you get from Kings Mountain to ..

I got on a train in Gastonia.

And the world was a totally different place then?

That's right.

And Morris Brown was a black college...

It was a private church school, AME.

What did you take while you were there to become a teacher?

Oh, I don't know, I took all of them that were required.

Did you take science, literature?

At first I took all business courses, then I decided I didn't want to be straight business. I went back to finish up my college work. It took me five years to do it. Two years business, and the other three years to get my degree.

Well, talk to me about what business courses you took while in school. Like, did they offer shorthand?

Typing, bookkeeping, shorthand, general business, business English.

So, you kind of thought you might want to go into secretarial or business work?

Well, honestly, when I went there, I just figured I couldn't go but two years, and that was the nearest I could do, was go to business and get out. But after I got there, I got a scholarship and they told me I could come back and finish and get my teacher's degree.

Well, you were smart to do that. Now, I want to ask you, did teachers make as much money then as secretaries?

I don't know what the secretaries made, but my first teaching certificate, my first check was $91.00.

Oh, my goodness, and that was for a month?

A whole month, $91.00, at Unity High School in Statesville.

Now, when you started teaching, was that public then?

Yes.

And was this high school all black?

It was all black.

Tell me about the school, itself. Tell me about your equipment and books.

Well, it was very well equipped. I had my typewriters and my books and everything else. I didn't want for anything.

So, it was a very good school.

Yes, I think it was the first year that they had that high school there.

So it was a new school?

It was a new school, new principal, and new everything.

And that was 1941?

1941, or 42.

Were there a lot of men teaching then, or was it mainly women?

There were more women, I know. I think there were about four or five men there.

Teachers?

Yes.

Were you the only business teacher? It was a small school?

Yes, it was a small school. I was the only business teacher there. I taught business and social studies, I taught business and history.

Ah, well tell me about your history books. What were they like? Did you like them?

Well, I don't like history.

You don't like history, well that's understandable, why you might not like history. I can understand that.

Well, they were state required text books. But I just don't like history, so I...

So, what did you do?

I taught it.

...You just took the book and taught it, whatever it was...

We made a pretty good job of it, because the kids did projects, and I had them study different things.

How did you teach them about their history? That wasn't in the text book, was it?

No, we did what they called Negro history month, which was February. We had several classes and things on it. We had them to look up several things.

We had them do special projects and look up things on Roland Hayes. Roland Hayes happened to be my husband's cousin, so they were fairly interested in that.

Now, what was he known for? I don't know, but I've seen that photograph before.

A world renowned singer, he was a tenor singer.

That's where I have seen him. It seems like the black people were really able . . .

That's the only thing they could do back then, to pursue their music. Because we used to sing with my high school octet, they called it. We went to several white churches, but we couldn't go unless we were asked to.

Octet, what's that?

Eight voices.

Oh, yes, you had eight voices, but you had to have eight voices?

Well no, we could go with women singing, but that just happened to be these eight people traveled a lot. We represented the school, went to different churches, and gave programs, and so forth.

Now, was this when you were teaching, or ..?

That's when I was in school.

When you were at the Lincoln Academy.

Yes.

Well, that's interesting. Let's talk about your typewriters. They were in good shape?

Brand new ones when I first started.

Brand new manual typewriters? Did you have any kind of calculators, or.. ?

No, the only thing we had was typewriters. That was it.

Were they like Royals, the old Royal manual typewriters?

I think I had Royals and L.C. Smith. Most of them were Royals.

Were most of your students women then in your typing classes, or did you have a mixture since it was a small school?

At Statesville, I think they were all women. After I started in Gastonia in Lincoln Academy we had a mixture.

So, back in '41 it was mainly all women?

Mostly all women taking business.

That's interesting. And did you teach business English, too?

No, typing, bookkeeping, shorthand, and, of course, they called it general business.

So, how did you seemingly fit in with these people? That's one thing, Elizabeth said you can just be sure and say, she said Mrs. Mann is about the same color as you are. Ask her how she fit in. Did she have problems with that, with being so light within the black community.

No. My education was financed, more or less, by white folks. They had those big conferences every summer, white and blacks. I just didn't..., honestly, I knew about segregation, but it didn't bother me too much. And after I finished there with them, I branched out somewhere else and I could see the difference. Of course, out there, everybody was somebody.

Right, at Lincoln Academy you felt comfortable because it was supported by a church group, supported by both black and white people?

Yes, but see when the state took over, they made a difference.

How?

Well, they took over the academy. In fact, it became all black. Black instructors, all black students, and everything else.

See, I had no idea, I didn't know that. And so, everything became separated, really separated. And it didn't come back together again until about the 50s, was it in the 1950s, or when did that start happening?

That would be in the 60s or 70s, mostly in the 70s.

We were late in the south. How long did you teach, until 19. .?

1978, about 30 years. I did one year at Unity High, at Statesville. And the other years were at Lincoln Academy, at Gastonia.

So you went back to teach where you graduated from high school.

See, I graduated from Lincoln Academy, the private school. When AME did away with the school, it became Lincoln High.

And that's in Gastonia?

No, its up in Bessemer City.

And it was Lincoln High in Bessemer City? And you taught there for ..

But it's Lincoln Junior High now. They moved it from Lincoln Academy, and it was Lincoln High for a while, and when they integrated they cut it down to junior high.

So you kind of started when it was privately owned, and then you saw the state come in and everything became separated.

That's right.

And then you worked until you saw integration come back again. So see, your story would be unique. That's going to be lost if we don't capture it. . How it was together, how it was pulled apart, and how it came back together.

It was interesting to see how things worked. But it was the funniest thing, out at where we lived, we weren't too much bothered by race. Blacks and whites got along just like, just people. Whenever I moved out from out there and came out and saw the difference, I said, "Well, good gracious."

How hurtful.

I remember one place we lived, there wasn't but one black family around there. It was us. And this white girl was nice, was just like us.

And this was when you lived in . . .

It was in Kings Mountain when I wasn't quite into high school. And my mother, when they would leave home and couldn't take the children, the children would stay with us.

So you were very close...

And when we got away from that, saw all this other stuff, it made us wonder.

When did you see that, when you moved to Atlanta?

I started, got a touch of it before then.

When?

Just at the Academy, we knew when not to step over that boundary and when not to step over it.

At Lincoln Academy, before you left there... That's when the state was coming in and taking over?

When the state took it.

So you were still at Lincoln Academy when the state took it, before you went to college, that you began to feel something "different."

No, I graduated from Lincoln Academy when it was still a private school.

Oh, I see, it was when you returned as a teacher, and the state had taken it over, that you really felt something had changed there, a feeling toward the people had changed?

The rural schools and rural families were much closer than city families. They depended on each other.

Right, it was survival. You had to stick together. And then, you went to . . .

I never did go to Lincoln High School. I finished from Lincoln Academy. I left Lincoln Academy when I went to college. When I left there I went to Morris Brown College in Atlanta. I came back from Atlanta, went to Statesville and taught one year. Then my husband went to service and I worked with the USO in Fayetteville, I think it was in 1945, 46, and 47, maybe. I worked as a secretary.

You were a secretary. And did you enjoy your work there?

Very much. That building burned down one night. We often wondered, but we had an idea what happened, but everybody was scared to express their opinion. We had a manager, the guy smoked all the time, and he would just flip his ashes just anywhere. And the fire came from his office. That was the only way we could see it could have happened. But they didn't do anything about it.

Then I came back and was hired as a teacher at Lincoln High. And I taught at.. No, I'm missing something. I taught at Highland High four years in Gastonia.

Do you think the school gained when the state took over, or do you feel that they lost something there?

Materially, it was ok. When we were separate schools we didn't have the facilities, the materials, the books, that we had when we became integrated. Because we had to buy everything. Nothing was given to us. After they got the

materials, some of them took advantage of it. Some of them didn't.

So the state, when they took over, they provided the materials. Were your materials the same as the other schools, the white schools?

You shouldn't ask a question like that.

I do want to ask that question, because we need to record this, we need to keep it, preserve the history.

I never, I don't think our equipment has ever been up to par with the whites'. They always got a little better than we got, or really more than we got. They didn't have such a hard run-around to get it.

Now, when the schools integrated, they gained that, they gained in that respect?

Some of it, yes.

But, what did they lose?

The opportunity to express themselves, or to be leaders. Because after we integrated we, as teachers, were kind of pushed back.

You felt pushed back too. With the students.

Yes, we lost some of our individuality. We were almost afraid to say, "teach Negro history."

Oh, I can't imagine.

The kids were interested, but you didn't know what to do with it. You didn't know whether to teach it, or whether to let it alone, or if kids asked you a question, you had to first think twice before you gave an answer. I know one child asked me one day, "Mrs. Mann, how come you all didn't get as much as we got?" How are you going to answer that question?

In class, a young white man asked you that? He didn't understand that?

He didn't understand that.

And how did you . . ?

I didn't, I just went on with what I was talking.

You just skipped right over the top of it.

I just skipped over it and went on about my business.

So, silence spoke.

But I didn't have too much problem. The only time I've had a problem with the white parents was over a little boy. A man about as tall as that door came in one day about his little boy, bad little fellow, and told me what he was going to do to me. I just looked at him, and said, Well, here I stand, you're bigger than I am, do what you want to do. But that child is going to behave in my class. If he doesn't, you take him home with you now." He said, "I will." I said, "Thank you."

Did he?

No, the principal wouldn't let him.

Good! So you felt you had the support.

I had to say something like that. _____ looked over and said, "You've got more nerve than anybody I've ever seen." I said, Well, that's just the way I felt about it. That little boy was no more than the rest of them. I've punished the rest of them, I have to punish him.

Right. And so . . .

One guy took us to court. He was . . ., in fact, he took the principal. The principal said, "Now you're going to go with us." I went with him. The judge looked at him and said, "Why are you bringing these people over here?" "They slapped my son." Said "Had it been me, I'd have stomped him." I said, "Oh Lord, let's go home." But you see, they weren't used to it, that's all.

And my principal, the little fellow was so bad, I just said, "I have never whipped a child but one, one child, over there in Belmont Junior High. He made the paddle for me to whip him. I had to whip one child, and never did have to whip another one. But this little boy was so aggravating, I said, "Go on to the office." And when I went to the office, he said, "What's the matter with him?" I said, "I can't do nothing with him." He just popped him one time, and said, "You do what she said or go home." He went home.

And he came back later? Did he behave?

He was bad as any big guy.

Did you feel scared?

He took us to court. And the judge said, "Is that all you did to him, Wilson?" Wilson, said "That's all I did to him. I popped him once when I went by him." The judge said, "He ought to have been licked."

Right.

He said, "Get out of this court. Go on back to your business." I said, "Oh, Lord." But you see you found some radical whites. And that guy wouldn't have done it if one of those white teachers hit him, he wouldn't have said a word. It was a black man hit him.

Oh, it was a black principal?

Yes. I looked at that little boy the next day, I said, "Honey," and he hugged me. He said, "Mrs. Mann, I'm sorry." I said, "Well, honey, you don't go home and tell Mama and Papa every little thing that happens at school unless you're going to tell it exactly right." He said, "I won't next time." I said, "You be careful about how you tell things when you go home. You let your daddy think that Mr. Wilson hit you intentionally hard. He couldn't have hit you too hard when he was just passing you by."

And so, that was at . . .

Lincoln High.

That seems to be when you first . . .

I didn't teach but two classes at Highland Jr. When I was at Highland, it was all black. Then I went to Lincoln High.

That was tough.

Yes, in a way it was tough. I guess it's all in the way you look at it. To me, I looked at it as a child was a child, white or black, you do as the rules say. One of those boys said to me one day, "You know who you're fooling with?" I said, "uh-huh, I'm fooling with one of my students and if you don't like what I do, you'll just have to find somewhere else to go." He said, "I'm going to tell my daddy." I said, "It's alright, your daddy don't pay my check." So when it was all over with, all my kids liked me pretty well. It's a matter of being firm.

And you knew where you stood on things and stood there.

You couldn't be wishy-washy with children. You have to just say one thing and mean it.

And you were teaching history then? social studies?

And business education...

Business education! It's such a pleasure to know someone who taught business education.

I taught bookkeeping, typing and shorthand.

And he was misbehaving in one of those classes? Now, you had all girl students, though in your shorthand classes, I'm sure. He must have been in your general business class.

He was in my history class. He was seventh grade.

MARY FRANCES COTHRAN'S HOME
604 Forest Hill Drive
Shelby, NC

May 15, 1995

We're going to talk about Ms. Cothran's experience as she began her teaching in 1935.

So, now, where did you first start to teach?

I taught at West School, they called it, in Gastonia. I was the first new teacher they had had in seven years, so when I went in my classroom, I saw this man, I thought it was, in the back of the room. I went across the hall to the principal's office and I said, "Mr. Abernathy, who is that man in the back of my room?" And he said, "Miss Hoyle, don't worry about that, he's been expelled six times. He just came back to see the new teacher." Honey, I decided I was going to do something about that. So, I talked with him, and we had a good understanding. That boy stayed in school all year, and would have the next..., I don't know whether he did or not, because I left but, anyway, he was a model student for me. Nobody could understand it, because they had all expelled him.

Now, what grade was that?

This was sixth and seventh grade, departmental work, because I couldn't get a job that year on my high school certificate, and so the superintendent of the schools, Mr. Grier, was a family friend, and that's where I got that job. And he gave me the departmental so I could work on my English certificate. But, anyway. . .

Was it hard to get jobs in 1935?

Oh, yes, real hard.

Tell me about how it was then, in 1935, what was it like as far as . . .

Well, you were just lucky to get work. And you worked for $70 a month. And I tell you what, I worked, really worked for that money, and I was about to turn myself against school teaching because of it. But see, I lived with my aunt over there, Mother's sister. And honey, if I didn't go home every weekend, see we ate our meals out. We had breakfast at her house, and they had box lunches at the school there for the teachers.

What did the children do for lunch?

Well, I guess they brought it. But, anyway, one of the first weeks I was following the principal in from the playground and he was out there seeing about things, and I heard him remark to this little boy, I don't remember his name, but he called his name, and said, "If you do that again, I'm going to thrash you within an inch of your life." And it horrified me so, that I sashayed right into the office and questioned him about it. And that was real brave for a first-year teacher to say such a thing. But, honey, I did and he was embarrassed to death. I said, Mr. Abernathy, I want to understand something. I was taught and brought up that we were supposed to lift people up, not knock them down, and I can't believe you said that on the playground. And he just stutterd and turned red, and went on, I guess surprised that I heard him. But, boy, from then on he handled me with silk gloves. And everybody thought I'd never get back another year. I stayed two years. I felt like you had to in order to get another job. So I stayed two years and then, taught one year, best way to help them out during the cotton pickin'. The last season they had cotton pickin'.

So, what do you mean, "cotton pickin"?

Well, you see, every summer they would let school out early for the children to pick cotton. And then they would start back up in the fall. So part of the summer they were out of school to pick cotton. So, anyway, I helped them out during that time, whenever it was. Then I went to Cherryville High School from there.

So you went from Gastonia to Cherryville High School, and there you taught English?

I taught English, shorthand and typing, I did everything, put on the plays, put on the first May Day program they ever had. I put on plays, I would stay at play practice until 11:00 at night, go home and grade papers until 3:00 in the morning. And now days it just kills me to have teachers that just throw them in the waste paper basket. I never did ask my children to do anything that I didn't think was important.

Now did you teach the shorthand and typing, you said. . .

In Cherryville High School, and English. Mrs. Hoyle and myself had the English Department. And Julia Wenfrow, what did she teach? High school math, I believe.

Tell me about your typewriters. Were they new or . . . They were manual typewriters. Royals?

Royals, in fact, all of them, I believe, in the class in Cherryville were Royals. Oh, sure, we didn't know what an electric typewriter was then.

And were your students mostly female students, or did you have mixed?

No, I had both, boys and girls. I had Tommy Moss, he took some typing just for his own personal use. But, they said I could see an error, and they didn't even know it was there. They said I could always fish it out in their typing, and I said, "Well, you train your eyes for things like that."

Now, did they have a vocational guidance counselor then, or . . .

The man would usually have that, vocational subjects. That was either agriculture, the making of things, you know, wood work and stuff.

What about Home Economics? When did that come in?

Oh, they had that too. Why sure, they had that was when I was in school.

And you taught that too, didn't you?

No, I didn't teach Home Ec.

It just kills me the way students have to pay, though. You don't want me to talk about that, but anyway.

Now, so your major was English?

English, high school English. And I taught my kindergarten conversation French, the five-year-olds.

Where did you go to college?

Erskine. A church school. But my kindergarten was just a marvel. I mean, I just had 5-year-olds and I taught that for fourteen years. I went from high school to kindergarten. And, honey, those little children really, the parents really appreciate you. Because, it's just unbelievable what a five-year-old can learn.

In the foreign language?

Uh-huh, anything.

They're so open.

Yes, they would bring their old shoes and we would cut the toes out and make tap shoes out of them. I always wanted to try kindergarten. When I got there, I decided I wasn't going to teach because I wanted to have my family. So, of course if I had been real smart I'd have gone back and finished out my years, you know. But I didn't. I just didn't want to be bothered. So I found out what a five-year-old was capable of doing. I cut out the other stuff I was doing, like finger painting and stuff that wasn't important.

Did you have that here in your home?

Yes, in my playroom. See, my children were all in school except Jennie. And I opened it for Jennie. Because I was going to have to take her across town. So, I thought, if I'm ever going to do it, it's going to be this year. And I didn't start until the middle of September, and had 20 my first year. From then on, I had to turn them away. I had 30 every year, with no help. One mother, one morning she let her child out, she said, "Mrs. Frances, the doctor says my child needs two or three eggs a week and I can't get an egg in her. Do you have any ideas?" I said, "No, but I'll think of something." And honey, rather than having two play periods that day, we came up to my kitchen and fixed egg-in-a-hole. I had a square frying pan. I had to do about 10 for everybody to have a sample of it, you know. And honey, then the child's mother said "How can I stop it? She wants them every meal." All the mothers were calling me and saying, "Mary Frances, how in the world do you fix an egg-in-a-hole?"

How do you?

A square frying pan, and you put a little margarine in it, and you take your bread cutter and cut a slice of bread. Then you put the little hole right here. Then you break your egg in the center that you cut out and flip it over then brown it. Then you put it on the plate. Then you put this little hole back in there and put a little margarine, brown it and you have jelly on it. Oh, they had the best time.

So you started the kindergarten when Jennie was . . .

Started it for Jennie.

So when everyone came to her house it was like having a giant party every day.

And the first year I tried having a tea party like the others do. I thought, well this is for the birds, it takes too much of my time--three hours. So, we stopped having tea parties but so many times a week. Then every month, we'd have a birthday party for that month. We'd have a big tea party and

a play period. They very seldom went on the playground. We didn't have time. They were just great. They learned a Bible verse, each letter of the alphabet, they knew all the presidents of the US and something about them that sixth and seventh graders didn't know, they had conversation French, they had rhythmic dancing and, honey, the ones that didn't know how to skate, I got on my skates, they brought theirs, and we skated.

How long did you do that?

Fourteen years. Loved every minute of it. And you see, that way instead of going back to teaching I chose that because I could be here for my children when they came from school. They were just up the street and I would go out there and meet them. And so, when my children came in and said, "Hi, Mom," I wanted to be able to say "hi" to them. If I had been teaching school, I couldn't have done that.

But, you see, having graduated in dramatics, I gave my recital by my self. So, that's the thing about it, I just felt like that I was qualified to teach kindergarten and I wanted to try it. But I went to every kindergarten program and I thought that if they can charge for this I can charge for what I'm going to do.

You just made your own small business.

Yes, loved it.

Now, what year did you start that?

I have no idea. Jennie was five years old. She was born in 53.

I guess around '58.

Fifty-eight or nine.

And part of that you had been in the high school.

I had been in the high school up until I got married. I had the best of both worlds. I loved high school too, but I always wanted to try children. If I had gotten married young, I'd have had a dozen children.

You just love them...

Yes, I really do. I did scouts for five years.

While you were doing kindergarten children?

Uh-huh, and I did cub scouts two years, one for each boy. In order to get Jennie into Brownies, I had to help them some, so I just took the girl scouts. She came up in the girl scouts with me for a couple years, you see, before I got her out of it. But, honey, you know, after all, that's life, that's the way it's supposed to be. I loved it.

When you taught in the high school, when you were teaching the typing and shorthand, were you the only one teaching the typing and the shorthand?

At that time.

And you did that in connection with the English and the drama and everything else?

Yes, and you know that was during when they had the camps, you know, the soldier camps, what did they call them? They asked the schools to have night classes for these boys that were in service.

They had them stationed all around, and there was one out from Cherryville, and they asked me about teaching night classes in typing.
For the veterans?

Uh-huh, for those CC Camps. And those boys came in, I even did that, and just for nothing. I mean, you know, now they've got it made.

And you worked so hard, for the least amount . . .

But see my sister has just finished, she teaches, and they've got their insurance paid for the rest of their lives, and all that stuff, and teacher's aids, and she made more than I did teaching school when I was doing all that stuff.

And so, did you teach these veterans in school?

CC camps, in Cherryville High School, at night.

And you were teaching them how to type and what else?

I think it was just typing. It was just a basic course; some of them hadn't finished high school. So, anyway, I had 15 or 20, I think it was.

And they were trying to retrain to get jobs?

Well, yes, they were trying to keep them in the school part time so that when they got out, they could go back to school. It was an elective subject.

They were trying to get them to go back to school?

Well, I'm sure it was, that was the satisfaction from it, but I didn't get anything extra for it. If I did, I don't know anything about it. I just did it. Some of them, I thought were pretty old at that time, I don't know. But they were students that really wanted to, though.

That was WWII. That would have been in the late 30s, early 40s.

Were there other teachers teaching subjects other than typing?

You know, the other day I was trying to think about that. It doesn't seem to me that. . . it seems to me it was just the typing class, and I guess it was just sort of like a business elective. They just asked me if I would be willing to do it, and back then you didn't say "no." You just said "yes." They were real nice, the boys. But they had some camps around Cherryville.

Oh, they lived there?

They were from all over the state, I imagine. They worked on roads, or anything they found them to do.

Finding employment was tough. Employment was tough for everyone.
Yeah, they were often in debt, I guess the government was. I have never worked in schools or anything just for the money part. Because I just loved being with the children, young people, so I just never think of that part of it. I just hope I can make ends meet. As I said, if I hadn't gone home every weekend, and one time I got so discouraged that Mr. Abernathy (who talked to that child), I went home that weekend and I just starved. I didn't want to teach school another day. And my mother said, "Well, you know you don't have to." I just resented it so, but I feel like I not only helped the children out by taking a stand, but I helped him out.